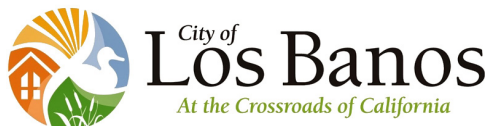
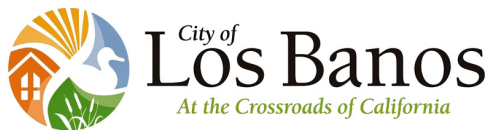


# GENERAL PLAN 2042



Public Review Draft | June 2022



City of  
**Los Banos**

*At the Crossroads of California*





# GENERAL PLAN 2042

Public Review Draft | June 2022

---



City of  
**Los Banos**  
*At the Crossroads of California*

Prepared by:







# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the General Plan.....	I-1
Planning Boundaries.....	I-3
General Plan Requirements.....	I-8
Themes and Key Initiatives.....	I-9
Plan Organization.....	I-15
Administration of the Plan.....	I-17

## 2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Demographic Trends.....	ED-1
Economic Conditions and Trends.....	ED-1
Downtown.....	ED-3
Fiscal Health.....	ED-3
Goals, Policies, and Actions.....	ED-4

## 3. LAND USE

Existing Land Use.....	LU-1
Land Use Concepts.....	LU-2
General Plan Land Use Designations.....	LU-5
Goals, Polices, and Actions.....	LU-13

## 4. CIRCULATION

Background Context.....	C-1
Circulation Themes.....	C-2
Roadway Network.....	C-3
Public Transit.....	C-10
Pedestrian Circulation.....	C-10
Bicycle Circulation.....	C-12
Parking.....	C-12
Goods Movement.....	C-16
Environmental Justice.....	C-17
Goals, Policies, and Actions.....	C-19

## 6. PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

Parks and Recreation.....	P-1
Open Space Resources.....	P-5
Biological Resources.....	P-10
Agricultural Resources.....	P-11
Water Resources.....	P-12



Mineral Resources..... P-14  
 Cultural Resources..... P-15  
 Air Quality..... P-17  
 Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases..... P-21  
 Environmental Justice ..... P-22  
 Goals, Policies, and Actions ..... P-23

## 7. SAFETY AND NOISE

Seismicity, Soil Hazards, and Erosion ..... S-1  
 Flooding..... S-4  
 Wildfire Hazards..... S-9  
 Hazardous Materials Sites ..... S-9  
 Health and Safety Services.....S-11  
 Local Hazard Mitigation Planning .....S-16  
 Climate Change and Resilience .....S-16  
 Noise .....S-17  
 Goals, Policies, and Actions .....S-23

## 8. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Schools and Community Facilities..... PFS-2  
 Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater..... PFS-4  
 Solid Waste Management and Recycling ..... PFS-9  
 Energy ..... PFS-12  
 Environmental Justice ..... PFS-13  
 Goals, Policies, and Actions ..... PFS-14

## 9. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Responsibilities ..... IM-2  
 The Regulatory System ..... IM-4  
 Capital Improvements Programming..... IM-6  
 Implementation Actions for Plan Policies ..... IM-7



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## TABLES

Table 1-1 Correspondence Between Required Elements and General Plan Elements.....	I-9
Table 1-2 CalEnviroScreen Scoring Indicators.....	I-12
Table 2-1 Total Employment Projections, 2020 to 2045 .....	ED-2
Table 3-1: Land Use Designation Density/Intensity Ranges and Averages .....	LU-8
Table 3-2: Land Use Allocations for Residential Neighborhoods (Individual neighborhoods will be 80-120 acres) .....	LU-18
Table 4-1: Level of Service Criteria for Intersections .....	C-6
Table 4-2: Planned Improvements.....	C-7
Table 4-3: Bikeway Classifications.....	C-13
Table 6-1: Existing Public Parks and Recreation Facilities .....	P-3
Table 6-2: Summary of Existing Park to Population Ratios .....	P-4
Table 6-3: Existing Farmland .....	P-14
Table 6-4: Listed Historic Resources.....	P-20
Table 6-5: Air Pollutant Sources and Effects .....	P-22
Table 7-1: Erosion Susceptibility .....	S-4
Table 7-2: Active Hazardous Material Sites.....	S-13
Table 7-3: Typical Noise Levels .....	S-18
Table 8-1: Community Service by Service Provider.....	PFS-1

Table 9-1: Consistency Between the General Plan and Zoning ..	IM-6
Table 9-2: Implementation Actions for Economic Development .....	IM-7
Table 9-3: Implementation Actions for Land Use .....	IM-13
Table 9-4: Implementation Actions for Circulation.....	IM-17
Table 9-5: Implementation Actions for Parks, Open Space, and Conservation.....	IM-20
Table 9-6: Implementation Actions for Safety and Noise .....	IM-26
Table 9-7: Implementation Actions for Public Facilities and Services .....	IM-31

## FIGURES

Figure 1-1 Regional Setting .....	I-4
Figure 1-2 Planning Boundaries.....	I-5
Figure 1-3 Los Banos Population from 1910 to 2020 .....	I-7
Figure 1-4 California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) Census Tract Scores in the Planning Area .....	I-13
Figure 1-5 CalEnviroScreen Indicator Scoring for Census Tracts within the Planning Area.....	I-14



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Figure 1-6 General Plan Policy Structure .....	I-16	Figure 7-3 Dam Inundation .....	S-7
Figure 3-1 Existing Land Uses .....	LU-3	Figure 7-4 Flooding Hazards .....	S-8
Figure 3-2 General Plan 2042 Land Use Designations .....	LU-6	Figure 7-5 Fire Hazard Severity Zones .....	S-10
Figure 3-3 Illustration of Floor Area Ratios .....	LU-7	Figure 7-6 Hazardous Materials Sites .....	S-12
Figure 3-4 Airport Land Use Compatibility Zones .....	LU-9	Figure 7-7 Police and Fire Stations .....	S-15
Figure 4-1 Existing Roadway System .....	C-4	Figure 7-8 Los Banos Municipal Airport Noise Contours .....	S-22
Figure 4-2 Planned Roadways 2042 .....	C-8	Figure 7-9 Future 2042 Noise Contours .....	S-33
Figure 4-3 Planned Improvements .....	C-9	Figure 7-10 Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments .....	S-34
Figure 4-4 Westside Subarea .....	C-10	Figure 8-1 Schools .....	PFS-3
Figure 4-5 Bus Routes .....	C-11	Figure 8-2 Water Distribution System .....	PFS-5
Figure 4-6 Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities .....	C-14	Figure 8-3 Groundwater Subbasins .....	PFS-7
Figure 4-7 Multimodal Network .....	C-15	Figure 8-4 Stormwater System .....	PFS-10
Figure 4-8 Truck Routes .....	C-18	Figure 8-5 Wastewater Collection System .....	PFS-11
Figure 6-1 Parks and Recreation Facilities .....	P-6		
Figure 6-2 Open Space Resources .....	P-9		
Figure 6-3 Agricultural and Working Farmlands .....	P-13		
Figure 6-4 Grassland Resources Overlay Zone (GROZ) .....	P-34		
Figure 7-1 Regional Faults .....	S-3		
Figure 7-2 Erosion Hazards .....	S-5		



*The Los Banos General Plan 2042 articulates the aspirations of citizens, City of Los Banos staff, elected officials, and others who participated in its creation. This chapter outlines the purpose of the General Plan, describes the planning process, and provides the reader a context in which to understand the plan's overall organization and the goals, policies, and actions contained in individual elements of the General Plan.*

## Contents

- 1 Purpose of the General Plan
- 2 Planning Boundaries
- 3 General Plan Requirements
- 4 Themes and Key Initiatives
- 5 Plan Organization
- 6 Administration of the Plan

## Purpose of the General Plan

The Los Banos General Plan is a document required under California law and adopted by the City Council to address issues related to physical development and conservation of City resources. While the plan builds on input from city residents, it is not merely a compendium of ideas and wish lists. Plan policies focus on what is concrete and achievable in the planning period to 2042 and set forth actions to be undertaken by the City. Broad objectives such as economic development, quality of life, and neighborhood character are tailored in support of community goals united under one overarching vision.

Los Banos' Downtown is the historical heart of the city and is key to the city's small-town identity. It is characteristic of a vibrant, safe, and attractive city with community character and an improved economy, new job opportunities, affordable housing, improved public services and facilities, an excellent circulation system, and a superb quality of life.



The General Plan is both general and long-range. It is designed to be used on an ongoing basis as State law requires a variety of City regulations, requirements, and actions that are consistent with the General Plan. Nonetheless, the General Plan does not, and cannot, cover all aspects of City government. There are some instances where detailed studies are necessary before Plan policies can be implemented.

Thus, the Los Banos General Plan 2042 serves the following purposes:

- It outlines a long-range vision that reflects the aspirations of the community and provides steps to achieve this vision;
  - It establishes long-range development policies that will guide the Planning Department, Public Works Department, Planning Commission, Airport Advisory Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Traffic and Safety Committee, and City Council decision making;
  - It provides a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with plan policies;
  - It allows City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve environmental resources, and minimize hazards; and
- It provides the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the Zoning Ordinance, subdivision regulations, specific and area plans, and the Capital Improvement Program.

### ***Why the Plan is Being Updated***

General Plans look ahead 20 years or more in the future and are typically revised every 10 years. Los Banos last adopted a General Plan in 2009. Since then, conditions inside and outside Los Banos have changed, including the economic recovery from the Great Recession, a worsening housing crisis in California, and the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of state and federal laws guiding General Plan policies have also been updated recently. As such, there is a need to take stock of the existing situation and plan for sustainable development in line with a vision. The General Plan 2042 focuses on meeting current community requirements and future needs. It is forward-looking and designed to address the challenge of accommodating growth and developing employment opportunities while enhancing Los Banos residents' quality of life and protecting the environment.

Many issues not covered in earlier plans are addressed here. These include how to enhance Downtown as a vibrant center, build a diversified job base, provide sites for housing and mixed-use development, and prepare for adaptation and resilience to a changing climate.



# 1 INTRODUCTION



## ***Plan Preparation Process***

The General Plan update was initiated in late 2017. The process included existing conditions data gathering, community engagement at the 2018 May Day Fair, recommendations for General Plan policy revisions to respond to legislative requirements enacted since 2009, an analysis of the competitiveness and feasibility of potential business park development in Los Banos, and preparation of a new Downtown Strategic Plan, which was approved by City Council in February 2020. Throughout each of these steps, the City sought feedback from the community, property owners, business owners, and Planning Commissioners and City Councilmembers.

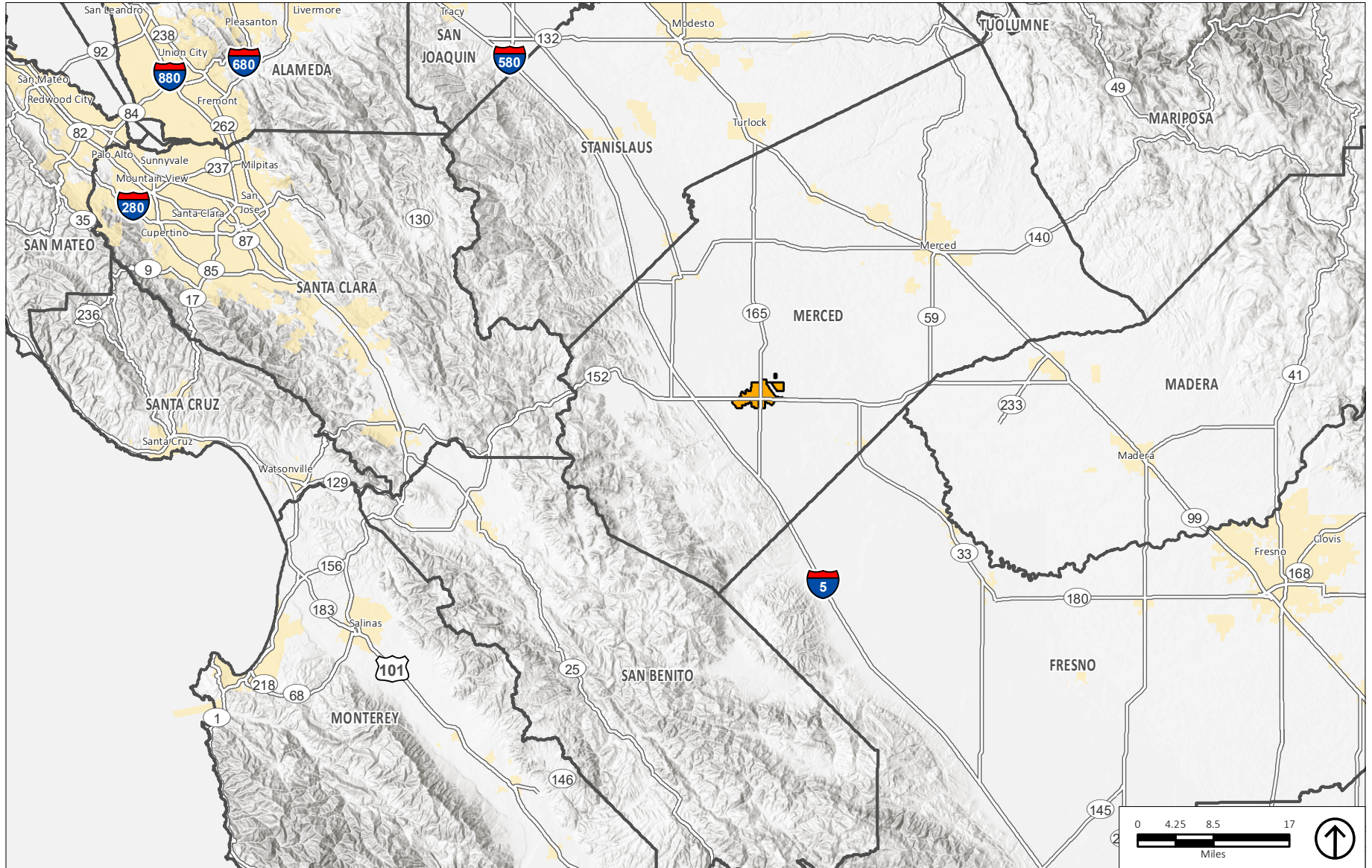
Staff also met with interested organizations, such as the Grassland Water District, Merced County Farm Bureau, Central California Irrigation District, and Los Banos Unified School District, to understand and mitigate their concerns.

Public feedback from community events and City Council and Planning Commission study sessions has been incorporated into the planning process and helped shape the policies and actions. Additionally, special stakeholder interviews were also held to refine draft policies. All of the documents, maps, and meeting agendas were made available for public download through the General Plan update website at [www.losbanos2042.org](http://www.losbanos2042.org), which offers information in both English and Spanish.

## **Planning Boundaries**

The City of Los Banos is within western Merced County, in the northern portion of the San Joaquin Valley (see Figure 1-1, Regional Setting). The city is conveniently located in the center of California, near the junction of California State Route (SR-) 152 and Interstate 5, approximately 120 miles southeast of San Francisco, 83 miles northeast of Monterey, and 72 miles northwest of Fresno. Los Banos is the second-largest city in Merced County and borders the communities of Dos Palos, Gustine, Volta, and Santa Nella. The San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area is west of the Planning Area. Various state and federal wildlife areas and refuges surrounding the Planning Area include the Volta State Wildlife Area to the northwest, the Los Banos Wildlife Area to the northeast, and the Mud Slough Wildlife Area to the east (see Figure 1-2, Planning Boundaries). The Planning Area is bordered by the Grassland Ecological Area (GEA).

INTRODUCTION



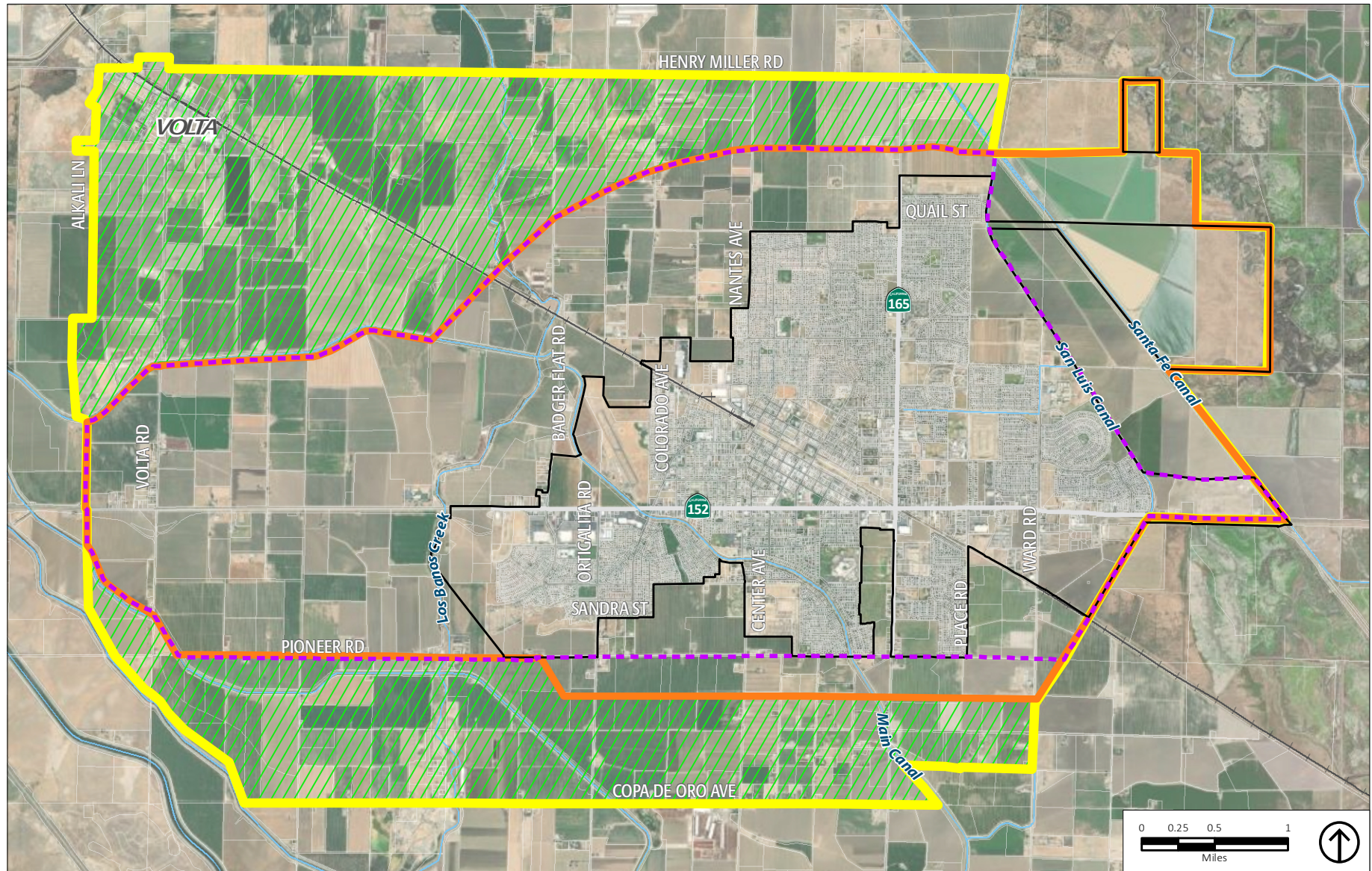
Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

County Boundaries    Other Cities    City of Los Banos

Figure 1-1  
Regional Setting



INTRODUCTION



Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2020.

- City Limits
- Planning Area
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Proposed Area of Interest (AOI)

Figure 1-2  
Planning Boundaries



## Planning Area

The Los Banos Planning Area encompasses just about 22,600 acres of land. This Planning Area is slightly smaller than that set forth in the 1999 General Plan (23,400 acres), as a result of contracting the area from the south and east to foster more compact development and protect farmlands. The Planning Area includes agricultural land and residential, commercial, and industrial developments, as well as public facilities, including parks, schools, and the wastewater treatment plant.

## Urban Growth Boundary

The General Plan 2042 Land Use Designations Map (Figure 3-2) depicts an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) representing land that is appropriate for and likely to be needed for urban purposes up to the year 2042. The UGB is shown in Figure 1-2. The primary purpose of the UGB is to promote compact urban development and protect surrounding agricultural land. Prior to urbanization, rural uses, including farming, are encouraged on land inside the UGB but outside current city limits. The UGB includes approximately 12,200 acres or 19 square miles.

## Sphere of Influence

Under State law, the sphere of influence (SOI) is defined as the ultimate physical boundary and service area of the City, beyond which, urban development will not be allowed except for public parks and recreational facilities. In this General Plan, the SOI is contiguous with the UGB except for the eastern and southern

areas. In these areas, the UGB limits development up to Pioneer Road in the south and the San Luis Canal in the east, while the SOI extends to encompass rural agricultural land the City wishes to control as a green buffer with little or no development. The SOI includes approximately 14,500 acres or 23 square miles.

## Area of Interest

An area of interest (AOI) is an area recognized by Merced County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) as an area outside of the SOI where County land use changes may impact City planning efforts. AOIs require agreement between the City and Merced County and establishes a process where the County would engage the City around planning and development activities on these lands. It does not establish control of that land for the City. In this General Plan, two AOIs have been identified, as shown in Figure 1-2. These areas are generally agricultural and open space lands with little to no development.

## *Planning in Context: A Brief History of Los Banos*

Before its founding, the land on which Los Banos is now located was part of the Yুক্ত Native American hunting grounds. The wetlands in and around the area provided everything the native people needed, including salmon, sturgeon, and game, such as elk and deer. For many years, the confluence of Bear Creek, Los Banos Creek, and the San Joaquin River with its large watershed, protected the region from early Spanish exploration. As such, the



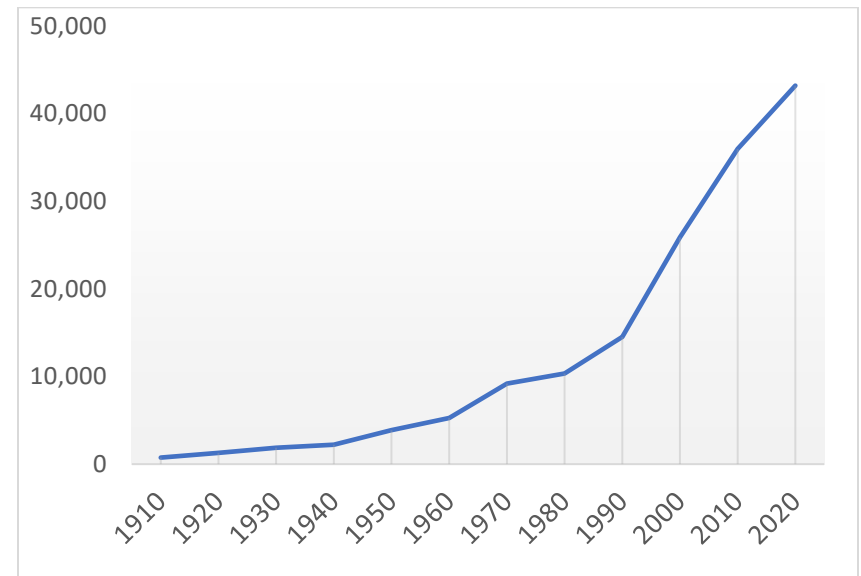
Yukuts were able to live in relative seclusion until the eighteenth century.

From 1808 to 1833, Spanish missionaries discovered the area when they moved over the mountains from Monterey Bay to look for grassy plains to nurture their stock. On one such visit, Franciscan Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta discovered pools of water in a creek bed that flowed into the San Joaquin Valley. Because of these pools, he named the area “Los banos,” which meant “The Baths.” Reports of these baths led to the local ranchers naming the creek “El Arroyo de Los Banos del Padre Arroyo.” In time, that lengthy moniker was reduced to “Los Banos Crick.”

The Gold Rush of the 1830s and 1840s brought miners, herders, and ultimately settlers and homesteaders to the San Joaquin Valley. Henry Miller arrived from Germany in 1847. With only six dollars in his pocket, he started a series of successful cattle ventures and acquired land around Los Banos. He created an irrigation system, introduced cotton, rice, and alfalfa to the valley, and brought the railroad to the area. He is honored today as one of the town’s founders and has a park named after him.

Los Banos’ population began to grow more quickly after World War II because of returning veterans and highway construction (see Figure 1-3). A series of irrigation and dam projects in the 1960s brought farmers in search of arable land. From 1970 to 1985, population growth began to stagnate. The City had reached a point where agriculture was no longer driving growth. Los Banos’ proximity to major employment centers in the Bay Area fueled a population boom from the 1990s to the mid-2000s.

**Figure 1-3 Los Banos Population from 1910 to 2020**



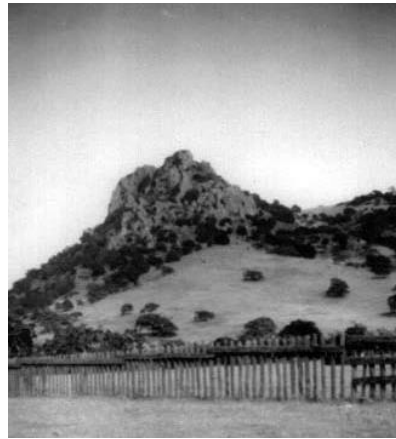
Over the decade between 2010 and 2020, Los Banos grew more slowly than Merced County or California as a whole. Household sizes got smaller, the proportion of residents over age 55 increased, and the number of nonfamily households and renters increased, as Los Banos continued to grow and evolve.





## General Plan Requirements

A city's General Plan has been described as its constitution for development—the framework within which decisions on how to grow, provide public services and facilities, and protect and enhance the environment must be made. California's tradition of allowing local authority over land use decisions means that the State's cities have considerable flexibility in preparing their General Plans.



*Los Banos' Pacheco Pass in the early 19th century*

While allowing considerable flexibility, State planning laws do establish some requirements for the issues that General Plans must address. The California Government Code establishes both the content of General Plans and rules for their adoption and subsequent amendment. Together, State law and judicial decisions establish three overall guidelines for General Plans:

- The General Plan must be comprehensive. This requirement has two aspects. First, the General Plan must be geographically comprehensive. That is, it must apply throughout the entire incorporated area and it should include other areas that the city determines are relevant

to its planning. Second, the General Plan must address the full range of issues that affect the city's physical development.

- The General Plan must be internally consistent. This requirement means that the General Plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. "Horizontal" consistency applies both to figures and diagrams as well as General Plan text. It also applies to data and analysis as well as policies. All adopted portions of the General Plan, whether required by State law or not, have equal legal weight. None may supersede another, so the General Plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element.
- The General Plan must be long range. Because anticipated development will affect the city and the people who live or work there for years to come, State law requires every General Plan to take a long-term perspective.

The Los Banos General Plan 2042 includes the eight elements required by State law: Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Safety, Noise, Housing, and Environmental Justice. It also includes these other optional elements that address local concerns: Public Facilities and Services and Economic Development. Furthermore, the Open Space Element has been expanded to include resources such as air quality. Table 1-1 outlines how the required and optional elements are

incorporated into the General Plan. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was completed for the General Plan update to identify potential environmental impacts.

**TABLE 1-1 CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN REQUIRED ELEMENTS AND GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS**

Required Element	General Plan Element
Land Use	Chapter 3: Land Use
Circulation	Chapter 4: Circulation
Housing	Contained in a separate volume
Open Space	Chapter 6: Parks, Open Space, and Conservation
Conservation	Chapter 6: Parks, Open Space, and Conservation
Safety	Chapter 7: Safety and Noise
Noise	Chapter 7: Safety and Noise
Environmental Justice	Incorporated as goals, policies, and actions throughout other chapters

## Themes and Key Initiatives

The maps and policies in the General Plan are structured around the following seven initiatives.

**Providing for balanced and sustainable growth.** The Plan offers proposals to create and maintain a cohesive development pattern amidst the agriculture landscape, with clearly defined urban edges. An urban boundary is created to protect Los Banos’

surrounding lands from sprawl, reduce the cost of extending costly infrastructure, and enhance the visual character of the City’s edge. Land use policies are enacted to reduce incompatible land uses and ensure developments pay for their share of infrastructure, public facilities, and any environmental costs they might impose.

**Creating new jobs to develop the local economy.** City officials and residents alike recognize that if Los Banos is to continue as a desirable community, being simply a bedroom community to the Bay Area is not an option. The plan strives for more local jobs and an improved jobs/housing ratio. Land has been set aside in ‘employment centers’ at various parts of the city, and economic development initiatives have been proposed to help make Los Banos a desirable place to work and live.

**Integrating neighborhoods and neighborhood centers.** Another central idea in this General Plan is the concept of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are the essential building blocks of good cities. Quality neighborhoods typically mean a quality urban environment. Balanced neighborhoods include a mix of residential types and intensities and include activities and facilities that are used on a frequent basis— such as schools, stores, and parks. Land uses are designated to ensure balanced neighborhood development with a mix of uses and housing types, provision of parks and schools, and easy access to commercial activity centers.



**Creating a network of parks and open space.** In addition to neighborhood and community parks, the General Plan proposes an interconnected network of pathways and trails. This system is envisioned to connect neighborhoods to one another and to create a pedestrian or bikeway linkage between parks, schools, neighborhood commercial centers, downtown, and employment centers.

**Creating a safe, efficient, and equitable circulation system for all users.** The General Plan establishes a comprehensive set of principles and policies to enhance the existing system and promote a well-integrated and coordinated transit network and safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Also, this plan proposes a system of plantings, trees, and other amenities to add pleasant visual character to Los Banos' streets.

**Providing ample retail and shopping opportunities.** Quality communities are often gauged by the quality of retail outlets. With this in mind, combined with the jobs and sales tax revenue that commercial properties produce, the General Plan proposes a mix of retail sites. These are intended to serve both local residents and a regional population and are to be accessible by both automobiles and pedestrians, depending on type and location.

**Planning for environmental justice.** Senate Bill (SB) 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, was passed in 2016 and requires that General Plans address environmental justice for disadvantaged communities that exist within the Planning Area.



*The General Plan provides for more retail opportunities for Los Banos residents*

California law defines “environmental justice” as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The law allows cities and counties to address environmental justice either by adopting a stand-alone environmental justice element or by incorporating environmental justice goals, policies, and actions into other elements. This General Plan takes the approach of incorporating environmental justice goals, policies, and actions into its other elements. These goals, policies, and actions address procedural inequities and geographic inequities.

- Procedural inequities occur when the planning process is not applied uniformly. Procedural inequities might include “stacking” commissions or committees with individuals who ignore the interests of minority and low-income residents, holding meetings at times and places that minimize the ability of low-income residents to participate, using English-only communications when non-English-speaking populations may be affected by land use decisions, and requiring lower levels of mitigation for projects affecting low-income and minority populations.
- Geographic inequities occur when the burden of undesirable land uses are concentrated in certain neighborhoods while the benefits of those land uses are received elsewhere. Geographic inequity can also result from the lack of provision of amenities proportionately across all neighborhoods. Geographic inequities might include when waste disposal facilities are located disproportionately in one neighborhood while the benefits accrue to the entire community, or when fewer public services, transit services, or parks are provided for minority or low-income neighborhoods than for white or middle- and upper-income neighborhoods.
- Identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by means that include, but are not limited to, the reduction of pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.
- Identify objectives and policies to promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process.
- Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

SB 1000 defines “disadvantaged communities” (DACs) per Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code as either low-income communities or communities that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards leading to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. The law specifies CalEnviroScreen as the primary screening method for identifying DACs.

CalEnviroScreen is an interactive mapping tool that maps pollution burden and population characteristics at the census tract level. It calculates a range of indicators under these two criteria, such as poverty, educational attainment, or age to determine a score for each census tract. The higher the score, the more impacted the census tract and the community residing in it is. Census tracts in the highest 25th percentile of scores (scoring

SB 1000 requires environmental justice goals, policies, and actions to address the following areas:



between 75 and 100) are DACs under SB 1000. The indicators used to determine this score are listed in Table 1-2.

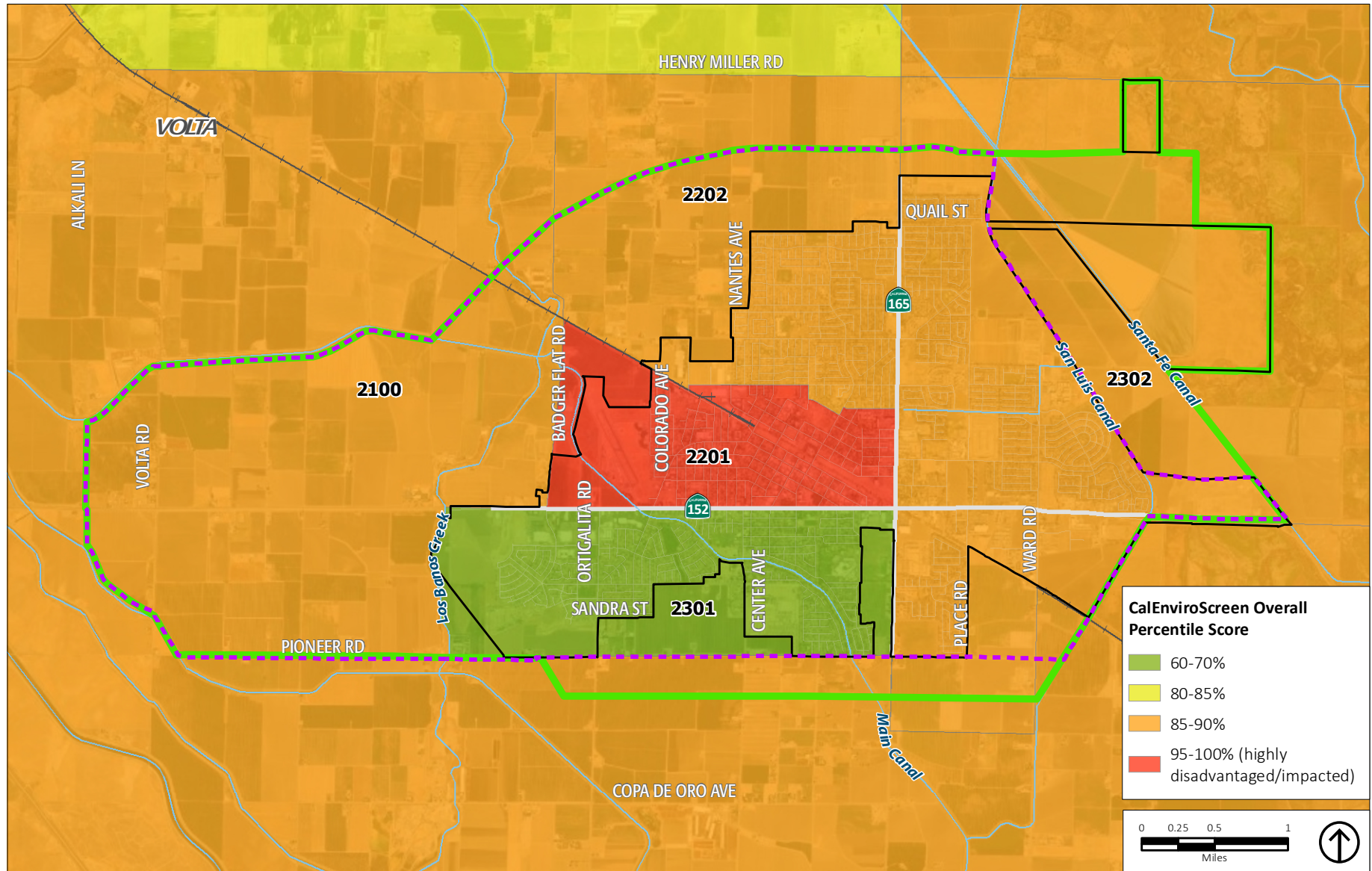
**TABLE 1-2 CALENVIROSCREEN SCORING INDICATORS**

<b>Pollution Burden</b>	<b>Population Characteristics</b>
<b>Exposure Indicators</b>	<b>Sensitive Population Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ozone concentrations in air</li> <li>• PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in air</li> <li>• Diesel particulate matter emissions</li> <li>• Drinking water contaminants</li> <li>• Use of certain high-hazard, high-volatility pesticides</li> <li>• Toxic releases from facilities</li> <li>• Traffic density</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma (emergency department visits)</li> <li>• Cardiovascular disease (emergency department visits for heart attacks)</li> <li>• Low birth-weight infants</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Effect Indicators</b>	<b>Socioeconomic Factor Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toxic cleanup sites</li> <li>• Groundwater threats from leaking underground storage tank sites and cleanups</li> <li>• Hazardous waste facilities and generators</li> <li>• Impaired water bodies</li> <li>• Solid waste sites and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational attainment</li> <li>• Housing burdened low-income households</li> <li>• Linguistic isolation</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> </ul>

CalEnviroScreen is available online through the California Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment, which hosts, updates, and maintains the tool. Figure 1-4 maps the CalEnviroScreen scoring of the census tracts that comprise the Los Banos Planning Area. As shown on Figure 1-4, most census tracts in the Planning Area score in the highest 25th percentile. Figure 1-5 shows the scoring of each census tract per indicator. The indicators with the highest (that is, worst) scores in Los Banos census tracts include those with levels of fine particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), groundwater threats, asthma risks, cardiovascular disease, and unemployment.



INTRODUCTION



Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021; Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

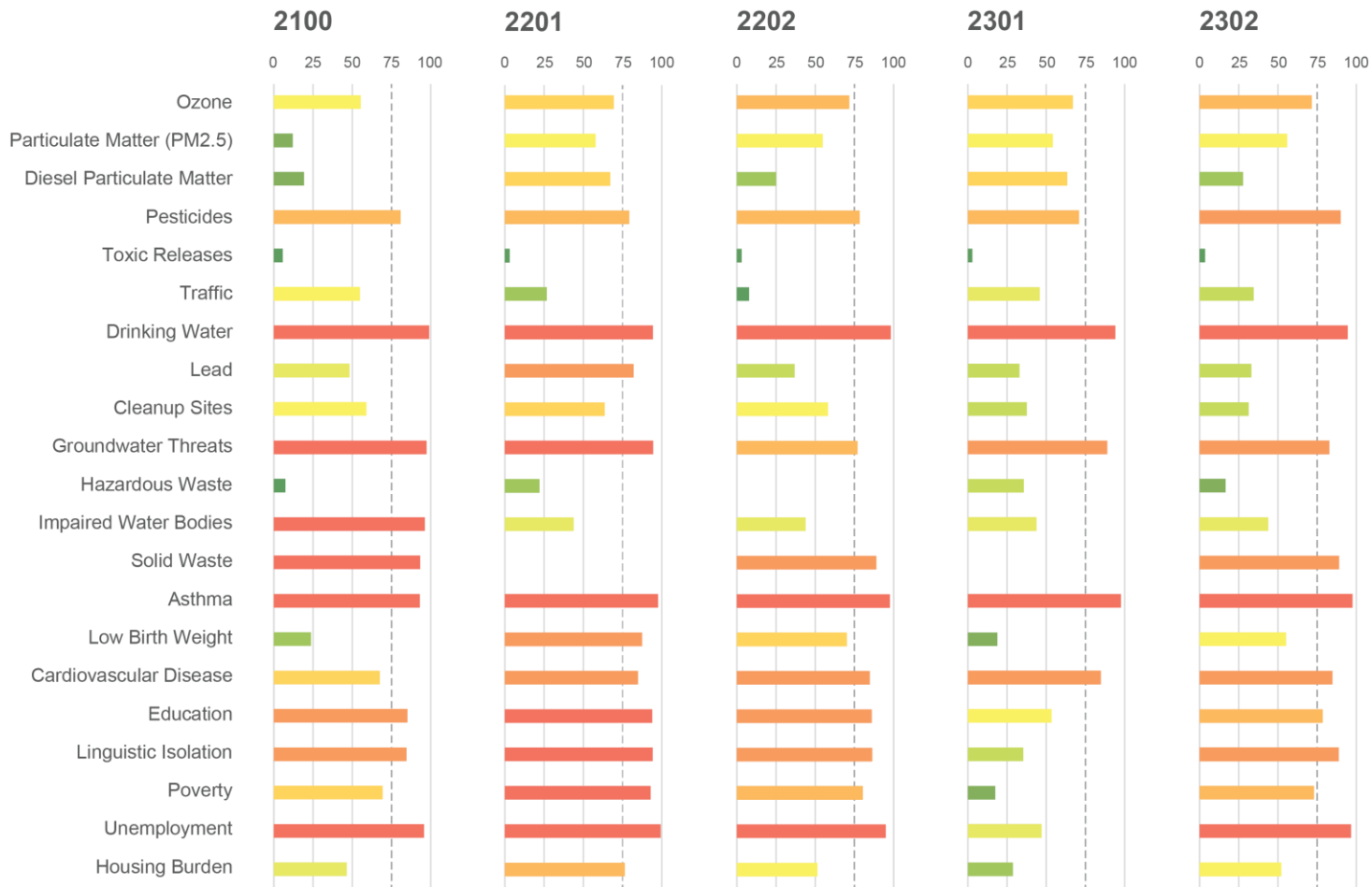
City Limits Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 1-4

California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) Census Tract Scores



**Figure 1-5 CalEnviroScreen Indicator Scoring for Census Tracts within the Planning Area**



Source: California Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment, 2021

## Plan Organization

The Los Banos General Plan 2042 is organized into the following chapters:

1. **Introduction.** This includes General Plan objectives and key initiatives, State requirements, and requirements for administration of the Plan.
2. **Economic Development.** This chapter provides the economic framework for development in Los Banos and outlines associated policies and implementing actions.
3. **Land Use.** This chapter provides the physical framework for development in the city. It establishes policies and implementing actions related to the location and intensity of new development and city-wide land use policies.
4. **Circulation.** This chapter includes policies and implementing actions to maintain efficient circulation. It identifies future street and bikeway improvements and addresses alternative transportation modes and parking.
5. **Housing.** This chapter identifies the housing needs of the city for all income levels and strategies and policies for providing housing to meet those needs. Since the Housing Element is updated more frequently than the other elements, it exists as its own document outside of this General Plan.
6. **Parks, Open Space, and Conservation.** This chapter outlines policies and implementing actions relating to regional and local parks and recreational facilities and preserved open space. It also addresses policies and implementing actions relating to habitat and biological resources, water quality, air quality, and historic and archaeological resources.
7. **Safety and Noise.** This chapter addresses the risks posed by natural disasters, such as seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, wildfire, as well as climate change. It addresses public safety services, including police and fire. This chapter also includes policies and land use compatibility standards to limit the impacts of noise sources throughout the city.
8. **Public Facilities and Services.** This chapter outlines policies and implementing actions relating to schools, libraries, and institutions of higher learning. The chapter also addresses local utilities, such as water, wastewater, stormwater, and energy.
9. **Implementation and Monitoring.** This chapter includes details on how the Plan will be implemented.

### *Policy Structure*

Each element of this General Plan contains background information followed by a series of goals, policies, and actions. The background information section of each element describes topics and current conditions in Los Banos specific to that element. For example, the Land Use Element defines a series of

land use designations that guide overall development in the city and the Circulation Element describes the network and hierarchy of streets.

The goals, policies, and actions provide guidance to the City on how to direct change and manage its resources over the next 20 years. Policies and actions are at the same level of importance and are both intended to implement goals. In most cases, goals have both implementing policies and actions. It is also possible for a goal to be implemented exclusively through either policies or actions. The following provides a description of each and explains the relationship between each:

- **Goal.** A description of the general desired result that the City seeks to create through the implementation of its proposed General Plan.
- **Policy.** A specific statement that guides decision-making in working to achieve a goal. Such policies, once adopted, represent statements of City regulation and require no further implementation. The General Plan's policies set out the standards that will be used by City staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council in their review of land development projects and in decision-making about City actions.
- **Action.** A program, implementation measure, procedure, or technique by the City intended to help achieve a specified goal.

Together, the goals, policies, and actions articulate a vision for Los Banos that the General Plan seeks to achieve. They also provide protection for the City's resources by establishing planning requirements, programs, standards, and criteria for project review. Explanatory material or commentary accompanies some policies. The use of "should" or "would" indicates that a statement is advisory, not binding; details will be added in General Plan implementation. Where the same topic is addressed in more than one chapter, sections and policies are cross-referenced. Figure 1-6 shows how goals, policies, and actions relate to each other.

**Figure 1-6 General Plan Policy Structure**



## Administration of the Plan

The General Plan is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, it may be subject to more site-specific and comprehensive amendments over time, amendments that may be needed to conform to State or federal law passed after adoption, or to eliminate or modify policies that may become obsolete or unrealistic over time due to changed conditions, such as the completion of a task or project, development on a site, or adoption of an ordinance or plan.

### *Amendments to the General Plan*

State law limits the number of times a jurisdiction can amend its General Plan to generally no more than four times in one year for a mandatory element, although each amendment may include more than one change. This restriction does not apply to optional General Plan elements (Economic Development and Public Facilities and Services), or if the amendment is necessary to allow for the development of workforce housing or to comply with a court decision.

### *Annual Report*

The California Government Code requires City staff to “provide an annual report to the legislative body on the status of the general plan and progress in its implementation” (Government Code Section 65400[b]). This report must also be submitted to the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and the Department of Housing and Community Development. It must include an analysis of the progress in meeting the City’s share of regional

housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to maintenance, improvement, and development of workforce housing (Government Code Sections 65583, 65584).

In addition, any mitigation monitoring and reporting requirements prescribed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) identified in the General Plan EIR should be addressed in the annual report because they are closely tied to plan implementation. Finally, the annual report should include a summary of all General Plan amendments adopted during the preceding year and an outline of upcoming projects and General Plan issues to be addressed in the coming year, along with a work program.



LOS BANOS  
GENERAL PLAN

INTRODUCTION 1

This page intentionally left blank.



# 2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*The Economic Development Element supports the prosperity of local residents and businesses by establishing policies and actions to help diversify the local economy and increase the quality and quantity of job opportunities for local residents. This Element also identifies steps the City of Los Banos can take to maintain fiscal health, decrease the need for local residents to commute, and create a thriving downtown that remains a focal point of community life.*

## Contents

- 1 Demographic Trends
- 2 Economic Conditions and Trends
- 3 Downtown
- 4 Fiscal Health
- 5 Goals, Policies, and Actions

## Demographic Trends

Over the life of this General Plan, Los Banos will continue to grow, creating demand for new housing, generating important market support for local retail and services, and providing a growing workforce that can support business expansion.

Between 2010 and 2020, the average household size in Los Banos became smaller, population age 55 and over grew more quickly than the remaining population, and the number of nonfamily households and renters increased. These changes point to need for a more diverse housing stock, to meet more varied household needs, and to be an attractive location for employers and workers.

## Economic Conditions and Trends

### ***Major Employers and Job Growth***

Major employers in Los Banos include public service providers and major retailers. The Los Banos Unified School District is the largest employer within Los Banos. The next largest employer is Wal-Mart, followed by Memorial Hospital. Of the remaining top employers, the majority are major retailers, including Target, Home Depot, Food 4 Less, and Save Mart. Kagome, a food service manufacturer, is the only industrial business within the top 10 employers.

The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) maintains job growth projections for the county. According to MCAG, total employment in the City of Los Banos and Merced County is projected to grow at roughly 1.3 percent per year between 2020 and 2045 (see Table 2-1). This translates to an increase of approximately 2,759 new jobs in Los Banos over the 25-year period. The Education and Health Services sector is projected to experience the largest net change, followed by Government, Retail Trade, Leisure and Hospitality, and Professional and Business Services.

**TABLE 2-1 TOTAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS, 2020 TO 2045**

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	Net Change (2020-45)	Average Annual Growth (2020-45)
<b>City of Los Banos</b>	6,966	7,318	7,867	8,432	9,065	9,725	2,759	1.3%
<b>Merced County</b>	82,017	86,055	92,099	96,913	103,290	109,480	27,463	1.2%

Sources: Merced County Association of Governments, 2016; Center for Business and Policy Research, 2016; BAE, 2018.

## ***Unemployment***

The City of Los Banos, similar to Merced County and the majority of California’s Central Valley, often suffers from elevated unemployment, and the results of economic downturns, such as the Great Recession, tend to be felt more severely here and last longer than in the state as a whole. Elevated levels of measured unemployment may be associated in part with the fact that seasonal agricultural work is an important part of the local economy.

## ***Workforce Characteristics***

Residents of Merced County, including those who live in Los Banos, generally have lower levels of educational attainment compared to the state. For example, approximately 32 percent of California residents have earned a Bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to around 14 percent in Merced County and 11 percent in Los Banos. However, according to the Census Bureau, the City of Los Banos is adding residents with higher levels of educational attainment at a faster rate than the state as a whole. In addition,

Los Banos is home to the full-service Los Banos Campus of the Merced Community College. Within 100 miles of Los Banos, there are eight additional vocational colleges and two four-year universities, the University of California at Merced and California State University Stanislaus. Additional investment in local education and training may offer important opportunities in terms of workforce readiness, the attractiveness of the local labor pool to employers seeking a more highly educated and highly skilled workforce, and consumer spending power that typically accompanies workers with higher educational attainment.

## ***Commute Patterns***

Approximately 74 percent of employed Los Banos residents commute to jobs in locations outside of Los Banos, but the largest portion of Los Banos residents work within Merced County, accounting for 43.3 percent of the working residents, including roughly 26.1 percent of working Los Banos residents who work within the City of Los Banos itself. Approximately 11 percent of employed Los Banos residents commute into Santa Clara County for work. This represents around 1,217 individual workers. Other

# 2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT



notable work destinations for employed residents include Stanislaus County, Fresno County, and San Joaquin County.

Around 61 percent of those working in Los Banos live in Merced County, with 45 percent living in Los Banos itself. Those local workers who commute in from homes outside of Merced County live mostly in Stanislaus County (6.3 percent) and Fresno County (5.7 percent), with only 3.3 percent of local workers commuting in from Santa Clara County.

## Downtown

Downtown Los Banos is an important community focal point, providing goods and services for local residents, businesses and their employees, and visitors. While there are other shopping and dining areas in Los Banos, downtown is unique, known for important local destinations like Wool Growers, Los Banos Drug Store, Santa Fe Foods, and City Hall. New lodging and residential uses can help to strengthen downtown for these targeted uses by expanding the base of demand for goods and services and enlivening the area.

However, the Downtown core is disconnected from nearby regional corridors, has vacant storefronts and vacant lots, and lacks prominent wayfinding and signage. The City's Downtown Strategic Plan seeks to address these and other issues to enhance Downtown and promote development, while maintaining its historic, small-town character. Based on input from stakeholders, community members, and City staff, the Downtown Strategic Plan includes a comprehensive set of strategies

designed to help achieve those goals, including how the City and Downtown property owners and businesses can work together to:

- Plan for New Land Uses
- Implement Gateways and Wayfinding
- Strengthen Businesses
- Rehabilitate Buildings
- Upgrade Infrastructure
- Improve Safety
- Establish Character
- Develop a Food Scene
- Manage Parking
- Create Public Spaces

The policies in this General Plan and the Downtown Strategic Plan will work together to support Downtown as a thriving retail, cultural, recreational, and entertainment center.

## Fiscal Health

High-quality public services, reliable infrastructure, and local quality of life are critical to attracting, retaining, and growing local businesses. In addition to providing land where businesses can locate and expand, the City plays a key economic development role in building, maintaining, and/or coordinating infrastructure to support businesses, including roadways, water and sewer services, solid waste disposal, and electricity and telecommunications systems. Public services like building permits, code enforcement, and City administration is also critical to support local businesses. This General Plan includes policies and actions to sustain the City's fiscal health and ensure that the City has the financial resources to develop and maintain high-quality public infrastructure and services.



## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### Create Jobs

#### **GOAL ED-1**

Help create jobs and improve job quality for existing and future Los Banos residents.

#### **POLICIES**

Policy ED-P1.1 Facilitate the development of new businesses and/or expansion of existing businesses through site availability, infrastructure investment, workforce preparedness, branding, and marketing.

Policy ED-P1.2 Create, maintain, or upgrade Los Banos' infrastructure to support economic development.

#### **ACTIONS**

Action ED-A1.1 Actively promote Los Banos as a good place for business through the following:

- Continue to attend trade shows, retail conventions, or other gatherings for targeted industries;
- Regularly schedule face-to-face meetings between City representatives and leaders of key local businesses for business retention purposes;
- Prepare effective and informative collateral materials to distribute to interested businesses;
- Publish an inventory of assets that Los Banos offers in newsletters and on the web;
- Create materials to keep businesses and industry groups informed of local services using electronic newsletter, postcards, and specialized promotional packages.

Action ED-A1.2 Create and market a unified and unique city image through a branding strategy that differentiates Los Banos from other communities in Merced County, the San Joaquin Valley, and California.

## Attract New Businesses

### GOAL ED-2

Seek and promote particular businesses or development projects that provide needed local goods, services, employment, or those that enhance the city's physical and social well-being and quality of life.

### ACTIONS

*Action ED-A2.1* Prepare an outreach strategy for targeted industries, focusing on:

- Industries/businesses that indicate an interest in, and/or represent a good geographical fit with the San Joaquin Valley, Merced County, and/or Los Banos;
- Industries whose labor requirements match the occupations and skills of the local labor force and local educational institutions;
- Businesses that rely on ground and air transportation;

- Businesses that can add to or leverage existing industrial clusters or firms;
- Public or private enterprises appropriate to strengthening the health/education/services sector, or those that would improve the quality of life for residents and help to attract higher-income households to Los Banos; and
- Partnerships with area educational institutions to assist with training for a new workforce.

*Action ED-A2.2* Continue to have economic development staff contact and visit target companies and industry associations, including businesses, real estate brokers, and site consultants.

*Action ED-A2.3* In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the Merced County Economic Development Team, continuously track local, state, and national economic trends to identify new candidate businesses/industries for Los Banos.



*Action ED-A2.4* Encourage the establishment and expansion of value-added food processing businesses in Los Banos that use local agricultural products.

*Action ED-A2.5* Explore including the warehousing and logistics industry as a recruitment target, including, but not limited to, research into the benefits and barriers to development of major warehouse and distribution centers similar in Patterson and Tracy.

*Action ED-A2.6* Explore possible expansion of the existing medical center, including location, facility size, infrastructure needs, and service capacity, etc.

*Action ED-A2.7* Continue to explore the possible relocation or closure of the Los Banos Airport with redevelopment of the site to potentially include regional recreation facilities, as well as retail, office, industrial, and residential uses.

*Action ED-A2.8* Continue to explore establishment of a business park that would provide shovel-ready land, as well as speculative and built-to-suit office and industrial buildings, with ready access to high-capacity utilities (i.e., water, sewer, electrical, broadband) and transportation infrastructure.

*Action ED-A2.9* Establish Los Banos as a tourism destination by promoting activities associated with the O'Neil Forebay, Grassland Ecological Area, and other points of interest around the city. Specific initiatives may include the following:

- Promoting commerce associated with the O'Neil Forebay as a summer recreation area, and the Tule Elk Reserve for wildlife viewing;
- Promoting commerce associated with private recreational activities within the Grassland Ecological Area, such as wildlife viewing and hunting;
- Establishing easy access to visitor information, such as lodging, dining, recreation, and cultural offerings in the city and surrounding area; and
- Providing clear signage on roads leading to points of interest.

*Action ED-A2.10* Investigate the benefits that senior communities may bring to Los Banos and, if appropriate, pursue development of such communities in appropriate locations.



*Action ED-A2.11* Promote youth-related businesses and those that provide activities families can enjoy together.

*Action ED-A2.12* Explore the feasibility of creating an Auto Mall at the eastern or western end of Pacheco Boulevard, near the State Route 152 bypass intersections.

### ***Invest in Human Capital***

#### **GOAL ED-3**

Cultivate partnerships with institutions that enhance skills and increase access to high-quality training and education for Los Banos residents.

#### **POLICIES**

Policy ED-P3.1 Promote workforce retraining and lifelong learning/education to increase education levels and promote job readiness:

- Provide technical assistance to employers that send workers for skill upgrading and/or retraining.

- Encourage local educational providers to establish continuing education programs to meet the existing and foreseeable needs of local employers.

Policy ED-P3.2 Encourage diverse housing types that meet the needs of the workforce, from executive housing to housing suitable for entry-level employees.

#### **ACTIONS**

*Action ED-A3.1* Actively recruit vocational institutions to locate in Los Banos, and support development of a vocational education certificate program at Merced Community College that can address the gaps for technical skills needed by the city's major industries.

*Action ED-A3.2* Actively recruit University of California Merced staff and students to network with Los Banos for research and development, pilot, or training opportunities.



*Action ED-A3.3* Work with high schools, the Community College, University of California Merced, other educational providers, and major employers to develop internship, mentoring, and apprenticeship programs.

### **Welcome Businesses**

<b>GOAL ED-4</b>	<b>Make Los Banos an ideal place to do business by fostering a business-friendly climate.</b>
----------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### **POLICIES**

*Policy ED-P4.1* Use available planning tools, such as Specific Plans, and conduct master environmental impact assessments for targeted business growth areas to clear the way for cost-effective development that can respond rapidly to user demand. (new policy)

### **ACTIONS**

*Action ED-A4.1* Improve the ease of doing business within the City to ensure the growth, development, and prosperity of Los Banos’ business community by:

- Continuing to maintain an inventory of “shovel-ready” sites, with information about their location, size, configuration, infrastructure availability, zoning, and other data that indicates readiness for development;
- Continuing to provide business assistance services, including visitation to existing businesses;
- Adopting a streamlined permit process and expediting permit decisions; and
- Creating a one-stop web portal for economic development.

*Action ED-A4.2* Establish financing plans for existing businesses seeking to expand in Los Banos for whom payment of fees “upfront” may represent a major financial burden.

*Action ED-A4.3* Develop an incubator program to foster the development of local start-ups.

*Action ED-A4.4* Establish a “Citizens’ Academy” to educate the public and businesses regarding the role of government in providing high-quality, but fiscally efficient, public services.

## Improve Downtown

### GOAL ED-5

Promote Downtown as a cultural and entertainment center to bring people downtown and stimulate business opportunities.

### ACTIONS

- Action ED-A5.1* In partnership with the Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown store owners, and local hotels, promote a varied seasonal calendar of parades, festivals, celebrations, promotional sales, and sporting events in Downtown that will draw visitors to the area.
- Action ED-A5.2* Encourage establishment of both temporary and permanent cultural attractions and entertainment venues within the Downtown to help establish it as a local destination.
- Action ED-A5.3* Explore establishing an entertainment district in the Downtown with a discrete boundary and strategies to promote entertainment uses, such as:
- Reducing permit requirements;

- Providing incentives for pubs and restaurants;
- Allowing for reduced or shared parking; and
- Delineating an area in which to facilitate food trucks and pop-up businesses.

*Also see policies in Chapter 3: Land Use.*

## Collaborate with Partners

### GOAL ED-6

Strengthen positive working relationships among the business community, education providers, regional economic institutions, and City government.

### ACTIONS

- Action ED-A6.1* Continue to work with regional economic development organizations to foster the economic health of the area.
- Action ED-A6.2* Continue to periodically survey the business community for evaluation of City services and improvement suggestions.



### ***Sustain Fiscal Health***

**GOAL  
ED-7**

Foster a fiscally healthy City government that provides high-quality public services. (ED-G-6)

#### **POLICIES**

- Policy ED-P7.1 Seek to maintain an operating reserve of not less than 30 percent of projected operating expense for the following fiscal year to ensure that sufficient financial resources will be available in the event of sudden economic dislocations or general economic slowdowns.
- Policy ED-P7.2 Ensure current revenue sources can adequately finance the City's capital and program initiatives, and at the same time, provide for adequate maintenance of existing facilities, or identify necessary and available revenue as needed.

#### **ACTIONS**

- Action ED-A7.1* Continue to identify, pursue, and secure funding from available local, state, and federal sources for economic development.

*The land use patterns in Los Banos reflect its heritage as an agricultural center, as well as its present and future as a desirable community for families, workers, retirees, and others. The overarching goals of this Land Use Element are to build on the strengths of Los Banos' historic character and existing neighborhoods, and to foster the creation of new communities with exceptional amenities and a sense of shared identity while protecting the agricultural land and habitat that surrounds Los Banos.*

## Contents

- 1 Existing Land Use
- 2 Land Use Concepts
- 3 General Plan Land Use Designations
- 4 Goals, Policies, and Actions

## Existing Land Use

Los Banos includes a historic core encircled by mostly single-family neighborhoods linked by commercial corridors. Much of the existing land use pattern found in the Planning Area can be traced back to Los Banos' evolution as an agricultural center within the Central Valley. Today, Los Banos is still surrounded by agricultural land and some of California's most important wetland habitats.

Existing land uses in Los Banos are illustrated geographically in Figure 3-1. Single-family residential is the most common land use within city limits.

Los Banos' Downtown is the historical heart of the city and is key to the city's small-town identity. It is characteristic of a late nineteenth-century central business district, incorporating a mixture of retail, public facilities, and older residential neighborhoods along tree-lined streets. Downtown's charming mix of old and new buildings and compact block sizes make it highly walkable.



Larger commercial uses and newer residential neighborhoods are further from Downtown and feature the more distinct separation of land uses characteristic of post-World War II urban development. Major commercial land uses tend to be along State Routes (SR-) 152 (Pacheco Road) and 165 (Mercey Springs Road). Most industrial areas are along the Union Pacific Railroad corridor and, to a lesser extent, around the Los Banos Municipal Airport. Agricultural uses predominate around the periphery of Los Banos. Schools and parks of various sizes are distributed throughout the city, with newer master-planned neighborhoods tending to have easier access to parks than those within the city's historic core.

## Land Use Concepts

The land use designations and policies herein are based on the following planning principles to support orderly, sustainable growth, invigorate the local economy, and make Los Banos a great place to live, work, and visit.

### ***Build Complete, High-Quality Neighborhoods***

This Land Use Element directs residential growth into infill projects or developments that represent complete neighborhoods. New neighborhoods will include a variety of complementary uses, such as neighborhood retail and restaurants, schools, parks and recreation, and other civic uses. New neighborhoods will be connected to surrounding development through a continuous network of streets, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and pedestrian paths.

The land use designation map shows new residential neighborhoods organized around neighborhood centers. Each neighborhood center features, at a minimum, neighborhood commercial uses as well as publicly oriented uses and gathering spaces surrounded by residential development.

A neighborhood center is typically located on an accessible, main transportation artery, with safe and convenient sidewalks and bikeways, and is composed of low- to medium-scale neighborhood commercial land uses that provide goods and services to the local community.

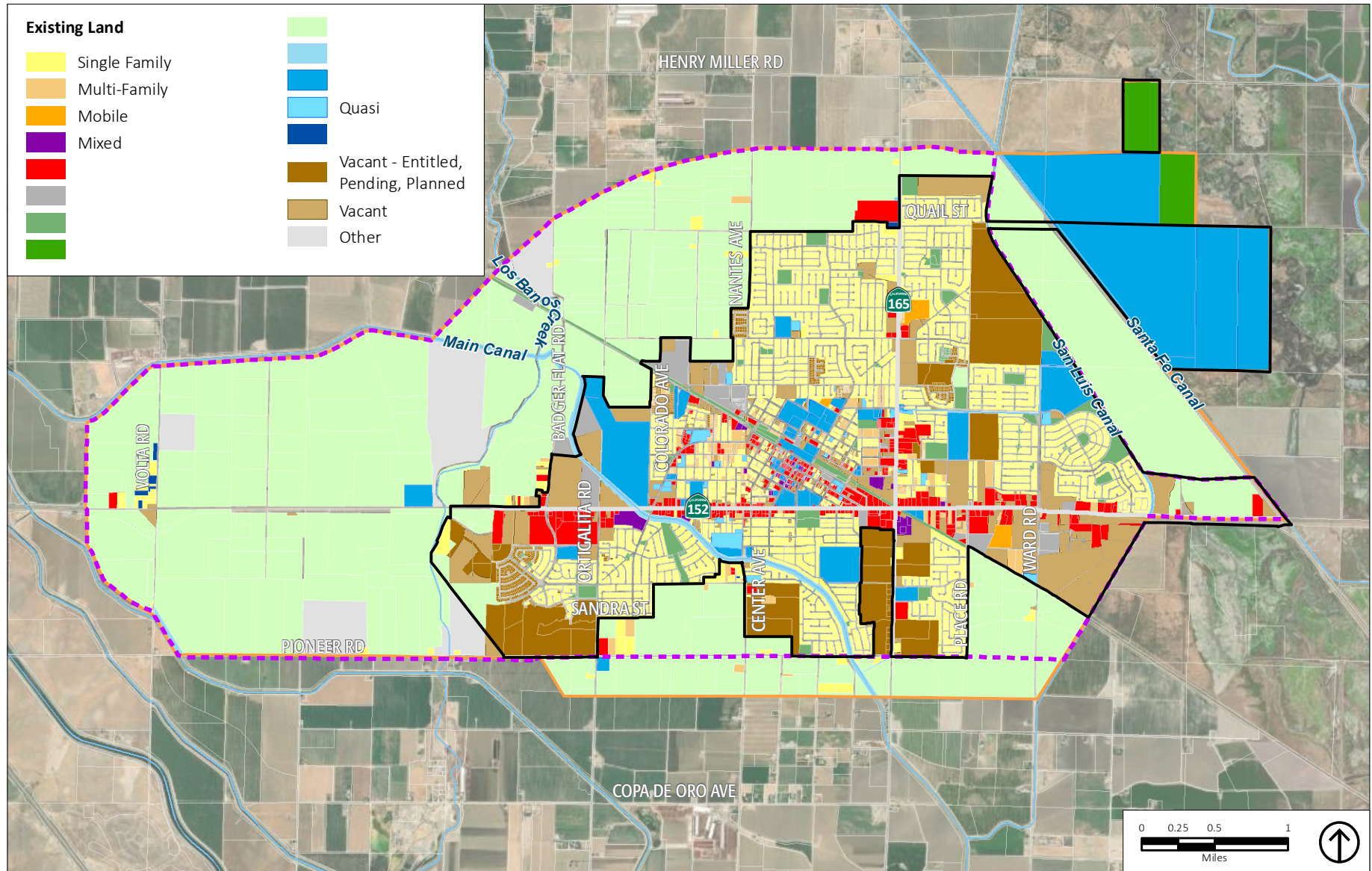
Services found at a neighborhood center may include a grocery retail store, cafés, drycleaners, post office, bank, and other small businesses. Neighborhood centers may also incorporate regional commercial uses when they border regional roadways.

Neighborhood centers are often located next to a civic use, such as a school and/or park. This central gathering area is surrounded by higher-density housing, which allows a larger number of people to reach these uses on foot or by bicycle and provides a larger nearby customer base for the businesses.

To assist local small business owners and ensure that a diverse range of neighborhood activities are available and easily accessible to residents, the General Plan provides sites for several neighborhood-oriented centers in both new and existing areas. Implementation of the General Plan would bring a substantially increased population within a convenient distance of a neighborhood center.



LAND USE



Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 3-1  
Existing Land Uses



### ***Diversify the Local Economy***

Historically driven by agricultural production and food processing, Los Banos' economy continues to expand and diversify, with new opportunities to tap into populations of talented workers. Los Banos' growth has also brought new opportunities to bring high-quality local and regional retail to the city and its residents. The General Plan provides for a full range of employment and retail opportunities to meet the needs of current and future residents and the business community.

### ***Strengthen and Support Downtown***

Los Banos envisions Downtown as a vibrant, welcoming neighborhood where residents and visitors come together to share in food, shopping, and culture. As part of this General Plan update process, the City Council approved a new Downtown Strategic Plan in February 2020. This General Plan supports the Strategic Plan's vision of Downtown:

*Downtown Los Banos is a vibrant, welcoming neighborhood where residents and visitors come together to share in food, shopping, and culture. Downtown's well-kept historic fabric and high-quality new buildings host a healthy mix of local and national retail, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Old and new housing in Downtown Los Banos meets a high standard of quality and supports its thriving business climate. Downtown Los Banos is clean, safe, and attracts young people, families with children, and tourists during the day and in the evenings.*

This vision of Downtown can be realized by encouraging a mix of 'work-live-and-play' land uses. A mixed-use land use designation allows for a variety of activities, including residential, commercial and office uses, as well as public and quasi-public uses.

Characteristics of Downtown include a pedestrian-oriented environment, mixed-use development with a backbone of retail use, streets on a grid or modified grid, and direct pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

### ***Tailor Regional Retail to Evolving Demand***

Los Banos attracts shoppers from a large region, including travelers passing through on SR-152. Regional retail centers are critical in shaping the identity and image of the city. To make them highly accessible to both local residents and visitors, these centers are planned along the major transportation corridors of SR-152 and SR-165. However, the nature of brick-and-mortar retail in the United States is changing rapidly as online shopping increases. To ensure the viability of the proposed retail regional centers, and avoid land or buildings that will sit vacant, land designated for new regional commercial uses corresponds closely to the anticipated need over the planning period.

### ***Create Diverse Settings for New Jobs***

In the current competitive economy, employers increasingly compete for skilled workers based on the convenience and amenities of the workplace. Single-use suburban-style office parks popular in the late twentieth century are being replaced by mixed-use buildings, standalone office buildings on infill sites, and adaptively reused buildings.

This General Plan anticipates that job growth in Los Banos will occur in both larger employment campuses and smaller, individual office buildings. Downtown offices are also encouraged on the upper floors of new mixed-use, multi-tenant buildings to add jobs within walking distance of residences, increase the number of customers for Downtown businesses, and provide smaller and/or flexible spaces for small- to medium-size firms.

The Land Use Element also provides significant acreage for flexible Employment Park uses to attract firms with long-term growth potential. Three employment centers are planned; the first is on large, undeveloped areas to the southwest of the Planning Area near the intersection of Volta Road and SR-152, the second is near Merced Community College (Los Banos Campus), and the third is west of city center at the site of the Los Banos Municipal Airport. The third area also includes rail-oriented employment sites in the Ingomar Grade corridor, which may develop before the airport is relocated.

Finally, the Land Use Element allows for ongoing and new industrial uses, particularly to capture opportunities for food processing facilities that capitalize on Los Banos' agricultural setting. Industrial businesses provide valuable jobs and can be sensitively integrated into the community with appropriate siting, buffers, and other mitigation.

## ***Provide Convenient, Efficient Services***

Civic and institutional facilities, such as City Hall, the Police Department, the Fire Department, and water and sewerage facilities are important elements of a safe, attractive, and cohesive community.

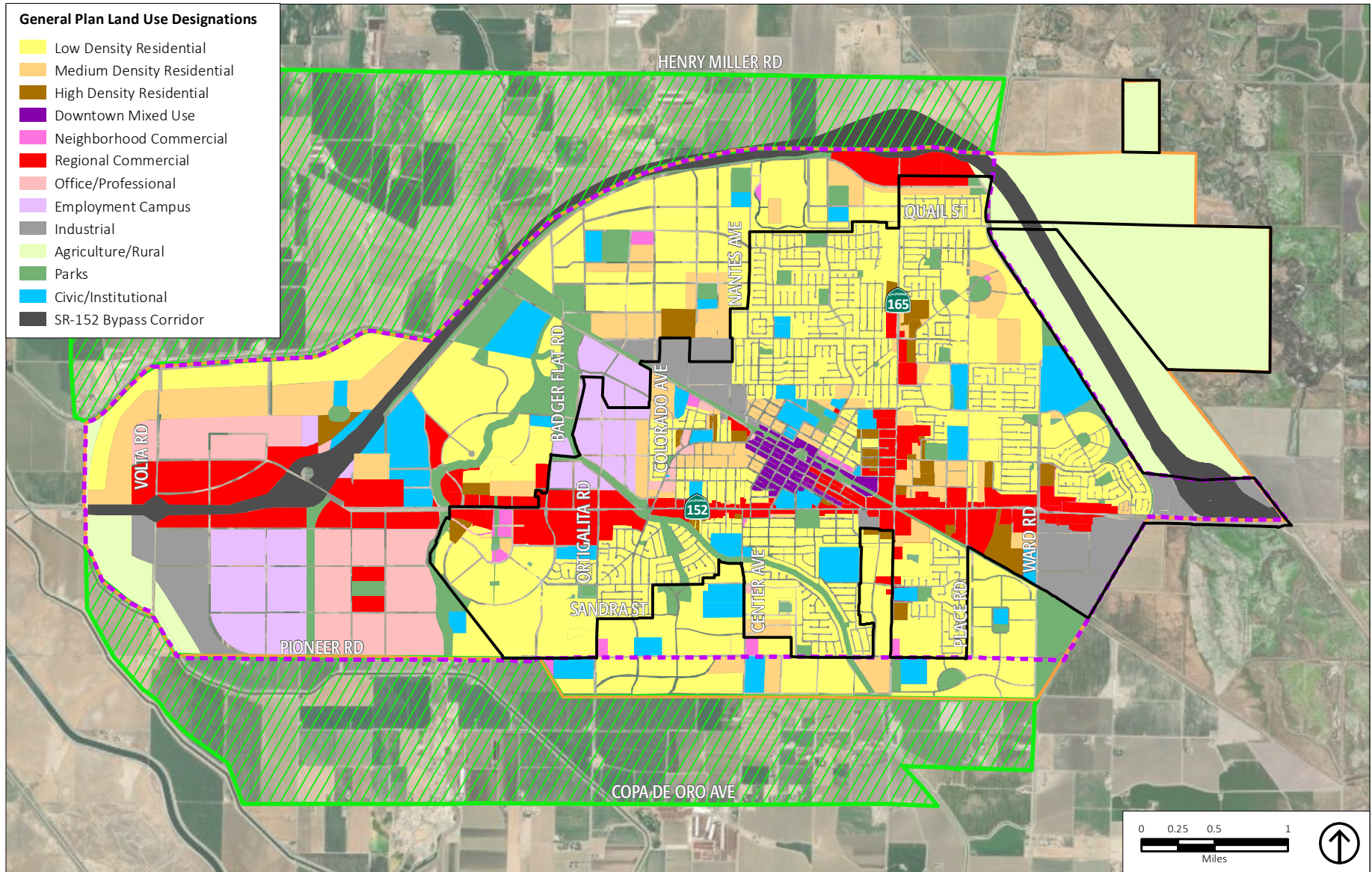
Community facilities, such as childcare services, schools, and libraries, also contribute to the quality of life and economic success. The City is committed to a collaborative relationship with the Los Banos Unified School District to identify and plan for appropriate school sites that are an asset to families and neighborhoods. This Land Use Element also allows community facilities that are appropriate for a residential environment, including residential care, daycare, elderly care, and alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities within neighborhoods, provided standards and licensing requirements are met. Large-scale community facilities will be in mixed-use neighborhood centers, on commercial sites, and in Downtown.

## **General Plan Land Use Designations**

The General Plan land use (GPLU) designations and land use designation map (GPLU map) are an expression of the community's vision for future conservation and development on public and private land in Los Banos through the year 2042. Figure 3-2 illustrates the General Plan 2042 land use designations. This map designates the proposed general location, distribution, and extent of land uses. As required by California law, each land use designation includes standards for development density or intensity of use.



LAND USE



Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit   
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)   
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)   
  Proposed Area of Interest (AOI)

Figure 3-2

General Plan 2042 Land Use Designations

## Density/Intensity Standards

The General Plan establishes density/intensity standards for each use classification. These density/intensity standards are shown in Table 3-1 and inform the City’s projected infrastructure, recreation, and other service needs.

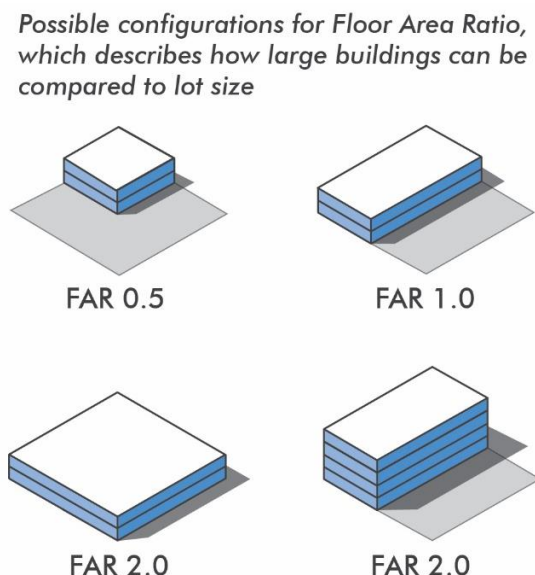
Residential densities are expressed in terms of dwelling units per net acre. The net-acre calculation uses a parcel acreage that excludes land devoted to road and infrastructure rights-of-way (ROW). Based on the net-acre calculation, the number of allowable units on a parcel can be calculated by subtracting the amount of land needed for ROW from the total number of acres, then multiplying the remaining number of acres by the allowable density. The assumed percentages of land devoted to ROW varies based on the land use designation:

- Low-Density Residential: 30 percent
- Medium-Density Residential: 25 percent
- High-Density Residential: 20 percent

Maximum permitted ratio of total floor area to site area, called floor area ratio (FAR), is specified for nonresidential uses. FAR is a broad measure of building bulk that controls both visual prominence and traffic generation. It can be clearly translated to a limit on building bulk in the Zoning Ordinance and is independent of the type of use occupying the building. For example, on a site with 10,000 square feet (sq. ft.) of developable land, a FAR of 1.0 will allow 10,000 sq. ft. of building floor area to be built. On the same site, a FAR of 2.0 would allow 20,000 sq. ft.

of floor area. This could take the form of a two-story building with 100-percent lot coverage, or a four-story building with 50-percent lot coverage. Figure 3-3 illustrates possible configurations of FAR.

**Figure 3-3 Illustration of Floor Area Ratios**



Intensity standards for nonresidential and mixed-use development are for each entire development site; that is, intensities on individual parcels with a larger project may exceed the maximum, provided the overall development project does not exceed the stipulated intensity.



**TABLE 3–1: LAND USE DESIGNATION DENSITY/INTENSITY RANGES AND AVERAGES**

Land Use Designation	Density (units/net acre)		Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
Low-Density Residential	2	6		
Medium-Density Residential	7	20		
High-Density Residential	20	30		
Downtown Mixed-Use <sup>1</sup>		30	0.50	2.00
Agricultural/Rural <sup>1</sup>		0.1		0.05
Neighborhood Commercial			0.25	0.60
Commercial			0.25	0.60
Office/Professional			0.25	0.60
Employment Park			0.25	0.50
Industrial			0.25	0.70
Park				0.05
Civic/Institutional			N/A	N/A
SR-152 Bypass Corridor <sup>2</sup>			N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Developments with no residential units are permitted for these uses.

<sup>2</sup> No development is permitted or expected within the area designated for the SR-152 bypass.

### ***Airport Land Use Compatibility***

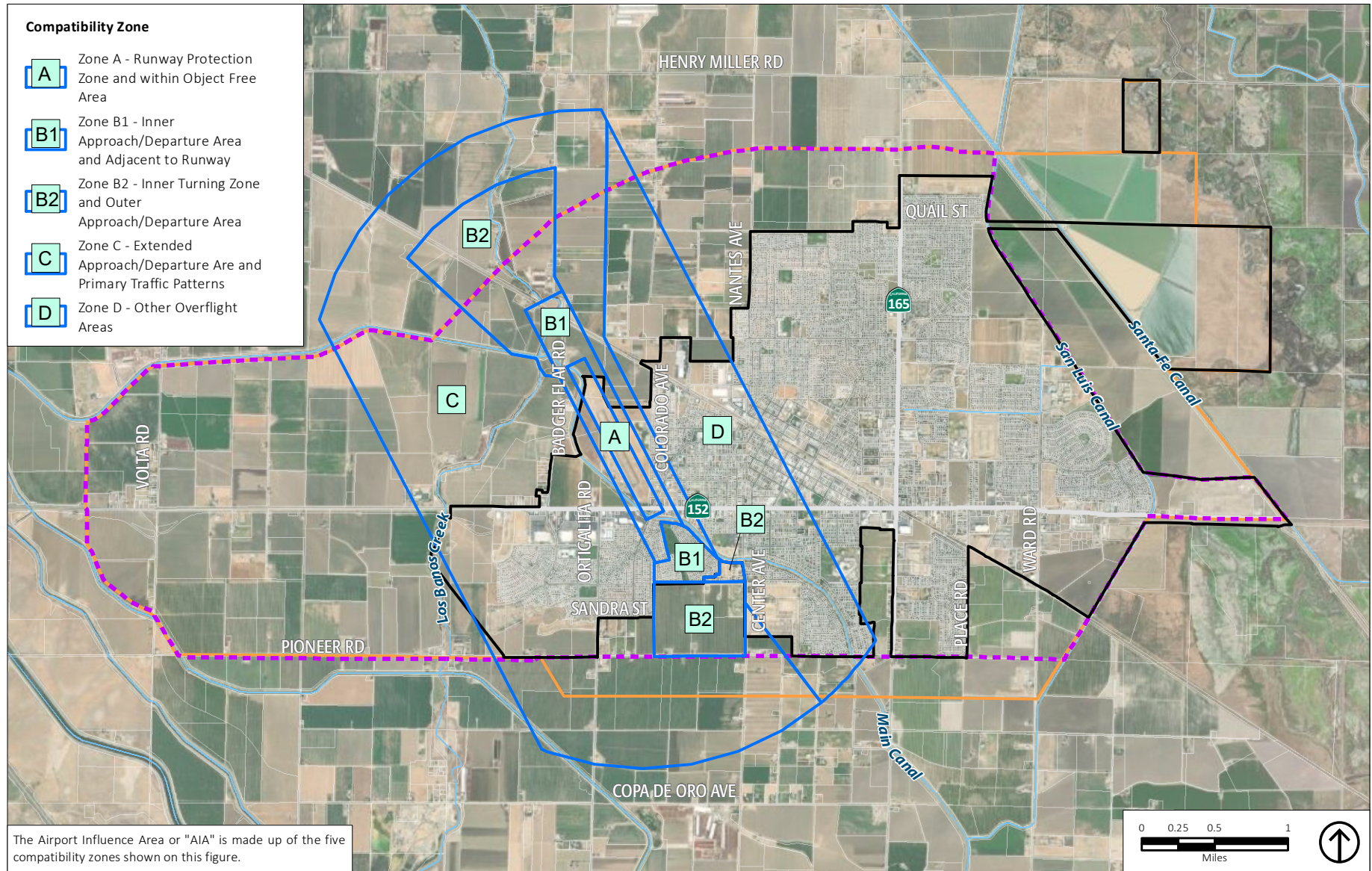
Land use compatibility with the Los Banos Municipal Airport is regulated by the Merced County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP), which covers multiple airports within the county. The influence area of the airport extends approximately two miles from their airport runways.

The City may relocate the Los Banos Municipal Airport to another site at some future point in time. However, until the airport is relocated, pursuant to the California Public Utilities Code Section 21676, development of land and changes in land use around the airport must be consistent with the ALUCP. Figure 3-4 shows the influence area and compatibility zones established by the ALUCP.

### ***Land Use Designation Descriptions***

The following descriptions apply to land use designations indicated on the General Plan 2042 Land Use Designations Diagram, as shown in Figure 3-2. The General Plan land use designations are meant to be broad enough to give the City flexibility but provide direction clear enough to realize the vision of the General Plan. Land use designations are grouped into the following categories: Residential, Mixed-Use, Commercial, Office/Industrial, and Public/Open Space. The City's Zoning Ordinance contains more detailed provisions and standards, and more than one zoning district may be consistent with a single General Plan land use designation.





Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 3-4

Los Banos Airport Land Use Compatibility Zones

## Residential

In addition to homes, all residential designations allow community facilities that are appropriate for a residential environment, including accessory dwelling units, home occupations, residential care, daycare, elderly care, and alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities, provided standards and licensing requirements are met. Houses of worship and other places for religious assembly, as well as private schools and colleges, are allowed subject to appropriate development standards and use-permit requirements.

Each residential use includes a density range. The top of the range is the maximum density, excluding any units that may be permitted through density bonus programs. Accessory dwelling units are not counted toward the density limits, as required by California law. New housing in the Medium-Density Residential and High-Density Residential designations must be built at or above the minimum density in the range. New housing at densities below the “bottom” of the density range for each designation is generally not permitted, although exceptions may be made for existing small lots on which higher densities are infeasible.

**Low-Density Residential.** This designation is intended for single-family development on lot sizes found in urbanized settings. Development intensities range from two to six units per net acre.

**Medium-Density Residential.** This designation is intended for small-lot single-family and low-density multifamily and/or attached homes. Allowable residential density is between 7 and 20 units per net acre.

**High-Density Residential.** This designation is intended for multifamily apartments and condominiums. Residential densities range from 20 to 30 units per net acre.

## Mixed-Use

**Downtown Mixed-Use.** This designation is intended for mixed-use development in Downtown Los Banos, and allows for a mixture of commercial, office, institutional, public/semi-public, and residential uses. Maximum FAR for nonresidential uses are 0.25 for retail, and 2.0 for office use, with a maximum of 30 dwelling units per acre.

## Commercial/Office/Industrial

**Neighborhood Commercial.** This designation is intended for a mix of neighborhood-serving commercial uses that include small-scale office space and small retail stores, such as grocery stores and pharmacies, serving local residents. Development must be pedestrian-friendly and incorporate public amenities such as fountains, seating areas, and/or shade. Houses of worship and other places for religious assembly as well as private schools and colleges are permitted in residential and commercial areas, subject to appropriate development standards and use-permit requirements. The FAR range for this use is 0.25–0.6.



**Regional Commercial.** This designation is intended for large-scale commercial developments that serve residents and visitors from the surrounding region. Examples of this land use include shopping centers, large-format retail, auto sales, and travel-related services, such as hotels, gas stations, and restaurants. Most shopping opportunities in regional retail centers are likely to be national retailers with immediately recognizable household names. These uses typically require good access to at least region-serving roadways. Supportive office uses are also allowed in this designation. Houses of worship and other places for religious assembly as well as private schools and colleges are permitted subject to appropriate development standards and use-permit requirements. Allowable FAR of nonresidential uses ranges from 0.25 to 0.60. In addition, multifamily residential apartments and condominiums with a density of between 20 to 30 units per net acre are permitted on Regional Commercial parcels that are at least 40 acres or larger in size. The density of the multifamily residential developments shall be based on the net acreage of the resulting parcel created through subdivision. Where applicable, the residential uses shall be placed on the side of the lot closest to other adjacent residential uses and/or on the side away from incompatible uses.

**Office/Professional.** This designation is intended for small-scale, local-serving professional and administrative offices, such as medical, dental, real estate, financial services, and research and development (R&D), as well as advanced educational or workforce training uses, such as community colleges and technology teaching institutes. Office/Professional parcels near the hospital allow specialized clinics, laboratories, and related services. This designation may also allow cafés, restaurants,

support services, and convenience retail activities. The FAR range for Office/Professional use is 0.25 to 0.60.

**Employment Campus.** This designation is intended for large sites that draw employees from a wide area and provide a significant number of jobs.

Sites with the Employment Campus designation are envisioned as a master-planned, regionally oriented development that may include business and office parks, light industries, incubator or research and development (R&D) laboratories, testing, packaging, or publishing centers, and employee-supporting amenities, such as dining, retail, services, and landscaped outdoor spaces. This designation also allows advanced educational or workforce training uses, such as community colleges and technology teaching institutes. Uses in this category are expected to have high-quality architectural and landscape design. Warehousing and distribution facilities are permitted as ancillary uses only. Industries producing substantial amounts of waste, odor, and other pollutants will not be permitted.

The FAR ranges from 0.25 to 0.50.

**Industrial.** This designation allows manufacturing, R&D, wholesale and warehouse distribution, agricultural and food processing, agricultural sales and services, truck terminals, utility operations, and similar activities, including those with outdoor facilities. Large retailers of appliances, heavy equipment rental, and sale of mobile homes or fabricated housing are allowed.



Supporting commercial services and ancillary office space are allowed but uses in this category do not require pedestrian traffic or high visibility and are not compatible with consumer-oriented retail. To minimize land-use conflicts and provide support for commercial areas, no large-scale retail uses are allowed.

This land use differs from the Employment Campus designation by the greater amount of waste, noise, odor, and other pollutants that may be generated, and the comparatively little research or knowledge-based activities that may occur. Due to potential land conflicts with residential areas, new industrial land uses are planned only at the edges of the Planning Area. Buffers and other mitigation devices will be required where development occurs next to agricultural land or habitat areas.

The FAR range for Industrial use is 0.25 to 0.70.

### **Other**

**Agriculture/Rural.** This designation is intended for rural and agricultural land uses without municipal services. Typical development allows for large parcels with housing and agricultural service buildings and uses, with a maximum density of 0.1 units per acre. For nonresidential structures, there is no minimum FAR, with a maximum FAR of 0.05.

**Parks.** Public and private recreation sites and facilities at intensities of up to 0.05 FAR.

**Civic/Institutional.** This designation is intended for lands including publicly owned facilities, such as schools, administrative offices, as well as facilities related to municipal services and infrastructure, including corporation yards, recycling centers, sewage treatment ponds, and police and fire stations. To offer public entities and institutions maximum flexibility, this use has no minimum or maximum intensity.

The school sites depicted on the General Plan 2042 Land Use Designations Diagram, as shown in Figure 3-2, are intended to relate well to adjacent uses, such as neighborhood focal areas and park sites. School site locations can be adjusted if the school district chooses not to locate in those areas and the land will be designated in a compatible manner with the surrounding uses.

**SR-152 Bypass Corridor.** This designation is for the areas that would be part of the planned SR-152 bypass around Los Banos. No development is permitted or anticipated in these areas, thus allowed densities and intensities are both zero. Existing agricultural uses are permitted to continue, but no new structures are allowed within the bypass designation.

### ***Neighborhood Planning Subareas***

#### **Pacheco Boulevard Corridor**

The Pacheco Boulevard Corridor subarea is along both sides of SR-152. This subarea contains various commercial establishments, including restaurants, automobile dealerships, hotels, retail, and some light industrial uses. Pacheco Boulevard is a major gateway into and through Los Banos. The General Plan

aims to keep land use mainly commercial and enhance its visual character through design requirements.

### Central Neighborhood

The Central Neighborhood subarea is bounded by H Street, Johnson Road, and the Downtown subarea. The subarea contains mainly low-density and medium-density residential homes built before 1980, as well as important destinations, like the hospital. Its proximity to Downtown and its central location make it attractive. The General Plan aims to retain most of the existing uses in this subarea.

### Airport

The Airport subarea is at the site of the existing Los Banos Municipal Airport. Under the General Plan, employment campus uses are planned in this area if the airport is relocated.

### Eastside

The Eastside subarea is north of Pacheco Road/SR-152 and east of Mercey Springs Road/SR-165. Much of this subarea contains existing single-family neighborhoods that will expand to include more single-family neighborhoods, along with medium-density residential, neighborhood commercial, and parklands.

## Goals, Polices, and Actions

### GOAL LU-1

Provide for orderly, well-planned, and balanced development.

### POLICIES

- Policy LU-P1.1 Promote sustainable, balanced, and well-paced growth and land use patterns that meet existing and future needs of Los Banos.
- Policy LU-P1.2 Maintain a well-defined compact urban form, with a defined urban growth boundary and development intensities on land designated for urban uses.
- Policy LU-P1.3 Require that any land requested to be annexed be contiguous with the existing city limits, within the urban growth boundary, and within the sphere of influence.
- Policy LU-P1.4 Require lands outside, but adjacent to, the current city limits to annex to the City of Los Banos prior to approval of new development or provision of any City services.



- Policy LU-P1.5 Prior to annexation, the City must find that adequate police, fire, and other public safety services can be provided.
- Policy LU-P1.6 Require that new development projects include full mitigation of impacts to City-funded services and infrastructure, including parks and recreational services, police and fire services, and City-owned infrastructure, both on- and off-site.
- Policy LU-P1.7 Ensure that new development provides for infrastructure, schools, parks, neighborhood shops, and community facilities in close proximity to residents.
- Policy LU-P1.8 Require areas annexed to the City to be served by City utilities. Prohibit new wells and septic systems to serve urban development within the city limits. Conversely, do not provide utility services, water, and sanitary sewer to new development outside of the city limits unless annexation is approved. Prior to annexation, the City must find that adequate water supply and service and wastewater treatment and disposal capacity can be provided. Existing water supplies must remain with the land and be transferred to the City upon annexation approval.
- Policy LU-P1.9 Coordinate land use planning efforts between City departments and with local institutions and regional agencies.
- Policy LU-P1.10 When approved development within the city reaches the maximum number of residential units or any of the nonresidential square footages projected in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), require that environmental review conducted for any subsequent development project address growth impacts that would occur due to development exceeding the General Plan EIR's projections. This does not preclude the City, as lead agency, from determining that an EIR would be required for any development in the sphere of influence to the extent required under the relevant provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (e.g., Section 21166 and related guidelines). The City will conduct the appropriate scoping at the time of initial study for any project, all in accordance with these requirements.



Policy LU-P1.11 Monitor growth rates to ensure they do not overburden the City's infrastructure and services or exceed the amounts analyzed in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report.

Policy LU-P1.12 Locate land uses to balance travel origins (homes) and destinations (schools, shopping, and jobs) as close as possible to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Policy LU-P1.13 The urban growth boundary (UGB) shall be amended only by a majority vote of the City Council that follows a public hearing and adopts one or more of the following findings based on substantial evidence in the record:

- A natural or humanmade disaster or public emergency has occurred that warrants the provision of housing and/or other community needs on land outside the UGB.
- An objective study has determined that the UGB is preventing the City from providing its fair share of affordable housing, or regional housing, as required by State law, and the City Council finds

that a change to the UGB is the only feasible means to enable the City to meet these requirements of State law.

- The land subject to the change is immediately adjacent to developed land and water and sewer connections are available.
- The change is required to conform to applicable California or federal law.
- Project-level and cumulative impacts affecting environmental resources, particularly in the Grassland Ecological Area (GEA), will be mitigated to less-than-significant levels.

*Also see Chapter 6: Parks, Open Space, and Conservation, for policies related to open space and reservation of agricultural land outside the UGB.*

## ACTIONS

*Action LU-A1.1* Seek Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) approval of a sphere of influence (SOI) line corresponding with the General Plan designation for the proposed SOI.



*Action LU-A1.2* Review and update Title 9 of the City Municipal Code (Planning and Zoning) and Zoning Map, as necessary, to ensure consistency with the General Plan.

*Action LU-A1.3* Adopt a Growth Management Program to monitor growth and ensure that provision of public facilities and utilities are aligned with development and track the amount of growth relative to what was analyzed in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report.

*Action LU-A1.4* Regularly evaluate and implement adjustments to the City’s fee structure to encourage development in areas where infrastructure is already present and ensure that non-infill development pays its fair share of anticipated citywide capital facilities and operational costs.

*Action LU-A1.5* Provide comments to Merced County on proposed significant development projects within the Planning Area to request consistency with this General Plan and other City regulations.

*Action LU-A1.6* Participate in the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) regional planning programs and coordinate City plans and programs with those of MCAG, including the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, and work with non-profit organizations also engaging in these planning programs.

*Action LU-A1.7* Coordinate with Merced College (Los Banos Campus) to ensure the development of roadways, utilities, and expansion of campus facilities is consistent with City plans.

**GOAL  
LU-2**

**Foster neighborhoods with exceptional amenities and design, broad-based opportunity, and a shared sense of identity.**

**POLICIES**

Policy LU-P2.1 Require new residential neighborhoods to be developed with a consistent aesthetic, appropriate and complementary scales of development, identifiable centers and edges, and well-defined public spaces for recreation and civic activities.

# 3 LAND USE

- Policy LU-P2.2 Create neighborhoods that are safe and welcoming for people of all life stages, family sizes, and income levels.
- Policy LU-P2.3 Ensure that all Los Banos neighborhoods enjoy convenient access to parks and recreational opportunities.
- Policy LU-P2.4 Ensure that the scale, operation, location, and other characteristics of community facilities, including parks, schools, childcare facilities, religious institutions, and other public and quasi-public facilities, enhance the character and quality of neighborhoods.
- Policy LU-P2.5 Require new developments and infill projects to include space for civic and institutional uses, to be maintained through capital projects, such as parks and open spaces, police and fire services, water and sanitary facilities, infrastructure, and other City services.
- Policy LU-P2.6 Require development to follow adopted Community Design Standards.
- Policy LU-P2.7 Require new residential development adjacent to established neighborhoods to provide a transition zone where the scale, architectural character, pedestrian circulation, and vehicular access routes of both new and old neighborhoods are well integrated.
- Policy LU-P2.8 Provide for a gradual transition in building massing and height between higher-density and lower-density residential areas.
- Policy LU-P2.9 Require buffers of varying size between residential uses and nonresidential uses without restricting pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Policy LU-P2.10 Require new multifamily housing to be near existing or planned neighborhood centers, open space, and be within a quarter-mile of any collector or arterial streets.
- Policy LU-P2.11 Locate a diverse range of civic, institutional, and community land uses in close proximity to neighborhoods, where feasible.



- Policy LU-P2.12 Ensure new neighborhoods are designed to incorporate appropriate public and community facilities, such as schools, childcare, community centers, parks, houses of worship, and/or libraries.
- Policy LU-P2.13 Require a centrally located neighborhood square or “commons” within each new residential neighborhood to serve as a focal point for the surrounding neighborhood.
- Policy LU-P2.14 Provide for a full range of housing types and affordability levels within neighborhoods, including specified mix of density per Table 3-2 to ensure that the economic needs of all segments of the community are met.
- Policy LU-P2.15 Permit childcare centers in all districts, subject to appropriate permitting requirements, and develop criteria for incentives for childcare facilities, including density bonuses according to State law.
- Policy LU-P2.16 Maintain local accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinances in a manner consistent with State law.

**TABLE 3–2: LAND USE ALLOCATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS (INDIVIDUAL NEIGHBORHOODS WILL BE 80-120 ACRES)**

Land Use Designation	Allowable Percentage of Total Units	
	Minimum	Maximum
Low-Density Residential	33 percent	75 percent
Medium-Density Residential	15 percent	57 percent
High-Density Residential	10 percent	52 percent
	Allowable Gross Acreage	
	Minimum	Maximum
Neighborhood Center	2 acres	10 acres
Civic/Institutional Neighborhood-Serving Facilities (e.g., elementary school, public safety facilities and community centers; the latter may be incorporated into Neighborhood Centers)	7 acres	10 acres
Parks and Recreation	5 acres per 1,000 residents	7 acres per 1,000 residents

## ACTIONS

- Action LU-A2.1* Periodically review the City’s development impact fees to determine whether they should be adjusted to reflect the City’s priorities for parks, community centers, and libraries that serve the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Action LU-A2.2* Create fee structures that incentivize the creation of attached, small-lot, and small-floorplan size ownership housing units to provide opportunities for many families to participate in the home-ownership market.
- Action LU-A2.3* Adopt ordinances that preserve affordable housing options while ensuring that housing meets habitability requirements and City codes.
- Action LU-A2.4* Maintain appropriate density bonuses for developers meeting State criteria for affordable housing and create an additional density bonus for projects undertaking elective off-site improvements (such as streetscape improvements) that further the City’s community design and/or open space objectives. This latter bonus cannot be

combined with the affordable housing bonus. Off-site improvements directly resulting from a project’s impacts, as specified in the Zoning Ordinance, may still be required; the bonus is intended for improvements that go beyond the required minimum.

- Action LU-A2.5* Continue to review development applications to confirm consistency with the adopted Community Design Standards.

- Action LU-A2.6* Amend the Zoning Ordinance in Title 9 of the City Municipal Code to permit multifamily residential development at a density between 20 to 30 units per net acre on Regional Commercial lots of 40 acres or larger in size.

## GOAL LU-3

**Provide a clear process for annexation proposals that ensures the proposals meet the requirements and needs of the Los Banos community.**

## POLICIES

- Policy LU-P3.1 Annexation proposals are required to meet the following basic requirements:





- a. **Location.** Require that any land requested to be annexed be contiguous with the existing City limits, within the urban growth boundary, and at least 75 percent within the sphere of influence.
- b. **Consistency.** Require that any land requested to be annexed is consistent with the policies of the City's General Plan and all appropriate City development standards.
- c. **Timing of Development.** Require lands outside, but adjacent to, the current city limits to annex to the City of Los Banos prior to approval of new development.
- d. **Utilities.** Require areas annexed to the City to be served by City utilities. Prohibit new wells and septic systems to serve urban development within the city limits. Conversely, do not provide City utility services, water, and sanitary sewer to new development outside of the city limits unless annexation is approved. Prior to annexation, the City must find that adequate water supply and service and wastewater treatment and disposal

capacity can be provided. Existing water supplies must remain with the land and be transferred to the City upon annexation approval.

- e. **Public Safety.** Prior to annexation, the City must find that adequate police, fire, and other public safety services can be provided.
- f. **Mitigation.** Require that new development projects include full mitigation of impacts to parks and recreational services, police and fire services, and public infrastructure, both on- and off-site.

Policy LU-P3.2 Require that Specific Plans be prepared for new areas proposed for annexation. Specific Plans must provide a coordinated, enforceable plan for land use, circulation, public facilities, and public services throughout the entire area. Specific Plans must also be consistent with all of the goals and policies of this General Plan and contribute toward achieving Los Banos' vision. Prohibit individual, piecemeal developments within future annexation areas.

- Policy LU-P3.3 Every Specific Plan shall include the following minimum requirements:
- a. The distribution, location, and extent of land uses, including standards for land use intensity.
  - b. Distribution and location of roadways, including the precise alignment of arterial, collector, and local streets, and bikeways.
  - c. Provisions for the extension of the existing city roadway system into new development areas.
  - d. Design standards for public arterials, collectors, and local streets that address street widths and lane configurations, landscaping and street trees, and the location of sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian amenities, as well as bike routes and on-street parking.
  - e. Distribution and location of, and specifications for, sewer, water and drainage facilities needed to serve new development consistent with City infrastructure master plans.
  - f. Distribution, location, and financing of parks, trails, schools, and other public and quasi-public facilities.
  - g. Design guidelines for all new public and private buildings.
  - h. Design guidelines for all new public and private improvements, including landscaping, park layout and improvement, neighborhood identification signs and monuments, and walls and fences.
  - i. An analysis of school needs for the Specific Plan area, the designation of required school sites, and the payment of impact fees for school facilities consistent with California Government Code Section 65995.
  - j. Provisions for development phasing.
  - k. Provisions for minimizing conflicts between new development and agricultural uses.
  - l. An analysis and disclosure of the adequacy of existing public services and facilities ability to meet demands



generated by development of the Specific Plan area and the identification of additional facilities and service enhancements needed to meet this demand. The Specific Plan shall also identify the method of funding new public services and facilities and the timing of the needed improvements and service enhancements to fully mitigate any impacts to public services or facilities.

- m. Implementation measures necessary to carry out the plan, including a program for financing public infrastructure improvements.
- n. A fiscal analysis that determines the impact of the development of a given Specific Plan Subarea on the City's general fund.

Policy LU-P3.4 Specific Plans for areas including residential uses shall meet the following criteria:

- a. A range of housing types shall be provided to ensure socially and economically integrated neighborhoods. The various housing types shall be

integrated throughout each neighborhood.

- b. The design of new neighborhoods shall be consistent with the goals and policies of the Land Use Element.
- c. The design of roadways and public rights-of-way shall be consistent with the goals and policies of the Circulation Element.
- d. New development shall be linked to adjacent existing neighborhoods and planned neighborhoods by collector and local streets. All existing stubbed streets shall be continued.
- e. Wherever possible and consistent with public safety considerations, drainage facilities shall use green infrastructure or be designed as natural waterways.
- f. A system of pedestrian trails or pathways and linear open-space corridors shall be provided to link residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, downtown, shopping areas, and employment centers.

- g. Within a Specific Plan area, the land closest to existing urban development shall be developed first, before outlying land.
- h. School facilities shall be planned and developed in accordance with the requirements of the Los Banos Unified School District and the California Department of Education.

Policy LU-P3.5 Specific Plans for areas including industrial and business park uses shall meet the following criteria:

- a. Provisions to minimize conflicts and ensure compatibility between new industrial development, existing agriculture, and existing or planned residential uses, including use of buffers, as appropriate.
- b. Provisions for services and amenities for employees, such as recreation, childcare, and dining.
- c. Coordination with adjacent industrial development in Los Banos.

- d. Coordination of roadway and infrastructure improvements/financing of frontage treatment along arterial roadways.
- e. Provision of all on-site infrastructure that is needed to serve the industrial or business park development and contribution towards a fair share of off-site infrastructure improvements.

## GOAL LU-4

**Protect and enhance Los Banos' image and unique sense of place.**

## POLICIES

- Policy LU-P4.1 Preserve and build upon Los Banos' historic charm and small-town feel.
- Policy LU-P4.2 Ensure that both new development and exterior remodels of existing buildings are compatible with nearby buildings, public spaces, and cultural/historic resources in scale, orientation, and materials.



Policy LU-P4.3 To the extent possible, ensure that new public and private investment preserves, enhances, rehabilitates, and celebrates local landmarks, buildings, neighborhoods, historic treasures, open spaces, cultures, and traditions that make Los Banos unique.

Policy LU-P4.4 Safeguard and leverage Los Banos' agricultural heritage for the benefit of the community.

Policy LU-P4.5 Require development to transition in density, with lot sizes increasing as a buffer for adjoining rural and agricultural districts.

Policy LU-P4.6 Require residential developments adjacent to the Central California Irrigation District Irrigation Canal/HG Fawcett Parkway to comply with buffer requirements and provide direct public access where feasible.

Policy LU-P4.7 Promote new development that is environmentally sensitive and sustainable.

Policy LU-P4.8 Facilitate environmentally sensitive development practices by:

- Exploring and promoting the use of new sustainable building materials, such as mass timber and cross-laminated timber in new development, consistent with State building codes;
- Encouraging the purchase of locally or regionally available materials, when practical;
- Encouraging both passive solar design features and the incorporation of solar panels or solar-readiness;
- Promoting the use of the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED rating system; and
- Creating Green Building Design Guidelines to be used in the development review process.

Policy LU-P4.9 Continue to require undergrounding of utilities in all new development.

Policy LU-P4.10 Require street trees on all public street frontages and adopt street tree guidelines that specify preferred species, spacing requirements, and planting guidelines in coordination with the Urban Tree Foundation.



Policy LU-P4.11 Require new development to incorporate public safety measures into site design, circulation, building design, and landscaping plans through the design review process.

Policy LU-P4.12 Require development proposals to incorporate bird-safe design measures, including the following design considerations and best management practice strategies:

- Avoid the use of highly reflective glass as an exterior treatment, which appears to reproduce natural habitat and can be attractive to some birds;
- Limit reflectivity and prevent exterior glass from attracting birds in building plans by utilizing low-reflectivity glass and providing other non-attractive surface treatments;
- For commercial buildings, interior light “pollution” should be reduced during evening hours through the use of a lighting control system;
- Exterior lighting should be directed downward and screened to minimize illuminating the exterior of the building at

night, except as needed for safety and security;

- Freestanding glass walls, and transparent building corners should not be allowed;
- Transparent glass should not be allowed at the rooflines of buildings; and
- All roof mechanical equipment should be covered by low-profile angled roofing so that obstacles to bird flight are minimized.

Policy LU-P4.13 Encourage lighting for safety and security while preventing excessive light spillover and glare. Lighting should complement building and landscape design.

Policy LU-P4.14 Require lighting plans for projects proposing exterior lighting. The design review process should be used to evaluate lighting for safety, consistency with dark sky objectives, and potential mitigation to reduce negative impacts on nearby properties.

Policy LU-P4.15 Continue efforts to improve street lighting, balancing financial, public safety, and environmental objectives.



**ACTIONS**

*Action LU-A4.1* Adopt a dark sky ordinance, including lighting standards and enforcement provisions that reduce light pollution. In the interim, refer to guidelines from the International Dark Sky Association during the review of major projects involving night lighting.

**GOAL  
LU-5**

**Provide residents with excellent employment and shopping opportunities.**

**POLICIES**

Policy LU-P5.1 Provide for a broad range of commercial uses that generate employment, retail sales, and tax revenue to strengthen the City’s economic base and provide employment opportunities for residents.

Policy LU-P5.2 Allow flexible planning for larger-scale employment-generating businesses, technology-based businesses, light industrial, professional offices, and other businesses wishing to locate in Los Banos.

Policy LU-P5.3 Locate regionally oriented commercial uses on major roadway corridors. Locate community and neighborhood-oriented uses within planned communities and neighborhoods.

Policy LU-P5.4 Foster viable, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers and strong, visually attractive regional commercial centers with a mix of tenants to serve both local and regional retail needs.

Policy LU-P5.5 Require pedestrian-oriented design in neighborhood centers, including “street-friendly” designs and amenities for public benefit, such as outdoor seating, plazas, weather protection, and transit waiting areas.

Policy LU-P5.6 Evenly distribute neighborhood retail centers in new development areas and encourage a mix of uses to offer both choice and convenience for shoppers and residents.

Policy LU-P5.7 Encourage existing neighborhood centers to expand to their maximum potential through reuse, rehabilitation, and infill development.

Policy LU-P5.8 Foster high-quality design and allow secondary uses in Employment Park or industrial areas if they can complement or enhance the primary use.

**GOAL  
LU-6**

**Develop a vibrant, mixed-use Downtown that is the pride of the community.**

**POLICIES**

Policy LU-P6.1 Promote the Downtown as a destination for commerce and entertainment, with office and high-quality housing to complement retail activity and infuse the area with daytime, evening, and weekend activity.

Policy LU-P6.2 Set a high standard for Downtown design and amenities to make residents and visitors feel welcome, safe, and engaged.

Policy LU-P6.3 Encourage more resident- and visitor-serving restaurants, retail, and consumer services to locate in the Downtown.

Policy LU-P6.4 Incentivize and encourage infill development, adaptive reuse of structures, and development on underutilized land to serve a variety of uses.

Policy LU-P6.5 Allow a range of medium- to high-density residential, live/work, and Business Commercial uses to support Downtown.

Policy LU-P6.6 Encourage pedestrian-oriented amenities near Downtown, such as outdoor seating, plazas, public art, weather protection, and waiting areas (benches and shelters).

Policy LU-P6.7 Require building continuity along H Street, with buildings oriented to the street, limitations on blank walls, parking tucked behind buildings, and adoption of landscape standards.

Policy LU-P6.8 Prohibit new warehouse/distribution or manufacturing uses in Downtown, which is defined as the area north of Pacheco Boulevard, east of Fourth Street, and south of H Street.

Policy LU-P6.9 Manage parking in the Downtown to ensure visitors can quickly find convenient and reasonably priced parking and reduce the need to dedicate valuable land to parking lots.



## ACTIONS

- Action LU-A6.1* Adopt flexible zoning and encourage a mix of residential, retail, and office in the heart of Downtown.
- Action LU-A6.2* Establish zoning, review procedures, and fees that encourage rehabilitation, renovation, preservation, and reuse of Downtown buildings with a mix of commercial, entertainment, and residential uses that promote around-the-clock activity.
- Action LU-A6.3* Target individual vacant and underutilized infill sites that are not part of larger neighborhood developments for additional high-density residential development.
- Action LU-A6.4* Establish incentives for anchor retail to locate in strategic areas of Downtown to maximize foot traffic and interest.
- Action LU-A6.5* Amend Title 9 of the City Municipal Code (Planning and Zoning) to provide flexibility for redevelopment of historic structures in the Downtown to meet current needs while maintaining the overall historic value.

- Action LU-A6.6* Facilitate planning and permitting for building renovations to ensure they are economically feasible and enable new uses that meet contemporary needs.
- Action LU-A6.7* Work with other public agencies and organizations to develop and use all available financing tools and incentives to stimulate investment in the Downtown, including areas within the Rail Corridor Master Plan.
- Action LU-A6.8* Evaluate and implement adjustments to the Public Facilities Fee structure to promote development in the Downtown.
- Action LU-A6.9* Implement the policies and strategies contained in the Downtown Strategic Plan, including by amending Title 9 of the City Municipal Code (Planning and Zoning) and permitting procedures/fees, as necessary.
- Action LU-A6.10* Explore the possibility of creating a commercial parking center to alleviate problems of on-street truck parking.

*Action LU-A6.11* Improve Downtown lighting, potentially including installation of new streetlamps or suspended street lighting, and/or requirements for new development to incorporate pedestrian-scale lighting.

*Action LU-A6.12* Improve Downtown wayfinding for vehicles and pedestrians to direct visitors to key destinations throughout the Downtown.

*Action LU-A6.13* Improve sidewalk maintenance in the Downtown and explore widening key sidewalks to provide space for outdoor seating and tree plantings.

*Action LU-A6.14* Implement complete streets projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety in the Downtown.

## GOAL LU-7

**Nurture individual neighborhoods by adopting tailored Land Use policies that address the needs of Los Banos' subareas.**

*Los Banos is divided into a number of subareas that have distinct characters and needs. The following policies, while potentially applicable to other areas as well, are written with specific subareas in mind.*

## POLICIES

### Pacheco Boulevard Corridor

Policy LU-P7.1 Enhance aesthetics and urban design along Pacheco Boulevard and improve the safety and experience of people walking and driving along the street consistent with the Pacheco Boulevard Complete Streets Plan.

Policy LU-P7.2 Gradually phase out industrial and warehouse uses along Central Pacheco Boulevard between Mercey Springs Road (SR-165) and Ortigalita Boulevard and explore mechanisms to help those uses relocate to planned Employment Parks or Industrial areas.

Policy LU-P7.3 Implement adopted Community Design Standards for buildings on Pacheco Boulevard.

### Central Neighborhood

Policy LU-P7.4 Recognize and leverage the presence of Memorial Hospital Los Banos to provide needed medical services for the community.





Policy LU-P7.5 Allow medical/dental offices, specialized clinics, laboratories, and related services to cluster around the Memorial Hospital Los Banos, subject to standards ensuring that surrounding areas are not adversely affected.

### **Airport**

Policy LU-P7.6 Prepare and plan for maximally beneficial potential future redevelopment of the Los Banos Airport site.

Policy LU-P7.7 Require developers to mitigate fully the environmental effects of development at or near the airport site following any relocation of the airport (particularly the potential impacts to Los Banos Creek riparian corridor and the City's water supply) by clustering development to maximize open space.

Policy LU-P7.8 Until such time as the airport is relocated, ensure that proposed residential, commercial, and industrial uses near the airport be consistent with Los Banos Municipal Airport Plan and the Merced County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Policy LU-P7.9 Establish design guidelines to ensure high-quality design and site planning at the Business Opportunity Area and the airport site.

Policy LU-P7.10 Encourage a campus-like setting for Employment Parks at the airport site, in the Ingomar Grade rail corridor at Johnson Road, and next to Merced Community College, with emphasis on pedestrian connections, streetscape beautification, and compatible building scale where the district connects to surrounding neighborhoods.

### **Eastside**

Policy LU-P7.11 Prohibit gas stations or other potentially polluting uses at the commercial area immediately south of the future SR-152 bypass interchange with SR-165.

*The Circulation Element provides guidance and specific actions to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of Los Banos' transportation system. As required by California law, this Element correlates with the Land Use Element to provide policies for managing transportation and traffic conditions in the city. Careful integration of the City's traffic and circulation policies with its land use policies ensures a circulation system that can accommodate the current and future vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, aviation, and goods movement needs of the city. The Circulation Element includes policies related to physical infrastructure serving development, vehicular circulation, bicycle and pedestrian trails, transit, regional goods movement, and aviation.*

## Contents

- 1 Background Context
- 2 Circulation Themes
- 3 Roadway Network
- 4 Public Transit
- 5 Pedestrian Circulation
- 6 Bicycle Circulation
- 7 Parking
- 8 Goods Movement
- 9 Environmental Justice
- 10 Goals, Policies, and Actions

## Background Context

Transportation programs are based on circulation system planning and land use planning. The City's traffic circulation planning efforts coordinate with those of the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 10. State-of-the-art traffic engineering through City implementation and policy guidance is used to bring planned improvements to reality. Development and implementation of all these strategies will seek to achieve a balanced and efficient circulation system for Los Banos.

Another objective of this Element is to create a complete and equitable transportation system that addresses all modes and users: personal motor vehicle use, commercial truck traffic, public transportation, bicyclists, pedestrians, youth, the elderly, and people with disabilities, as well as airport facilities and users. It contains policies to meet State requirements to implement complete streets and address environmental justice by ensuring

the circulation system of Los Banos is fully accessible by and meets the needs of disadvantaged communities.

This Element provides direction for the construction of new routes to serve new development and the expansion of the existing circulation system. In addition, the General Plan establishes a range of street classifications to be applied for roads in different contexts. The Element recognizes the need to provide an environment that encourages walking, particularly at high activity centers, and provides ways to reduce auto-dependence by facilitating use of alternate modes of travel.

## Circulation Themes

### ***Complete Streets***

Complete streets create a circulation network that accommodates multimodal travel, allowing people of all ages and abilities to safely travel by vehicle, foot, bicycle, and transit within the city and to the larger region. Circulation policies supporting complete streets promote roadway improvements that incorporate pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit facilities where feasible on thoroughfares that are mainly used by vehicles. Policies also guide the design of new streets, whether private or public, to serve a complete range of users. Caltrans has a Complete Streets Program that it implements on State-regulated highways.

The Los Banos City Council accepted the Pacheco Boulevard Complete Streets Plan and the Pioneer Road Complete Streets Plan in 2021. The Pacheco Boulevard Complete Streets Plan will

enhance Pacheco Boulevard using strategies that create a more efficient, safe, and attractive street for people driving, walking, and bicycling. The Pioneer Road Complete Streets Plan includes proposed improvements to make Pioneer Road an attractive boulevard providing a new east-west connection for cars and trucks that would include safe and comfortable facilities for people walking and bicycling.

### ***Connectivity***

Connectivity strategies promote connection locally between residential neighborhoods, Downtown, employment centers, and shopping locations in Los Banos, and regionally by improving links to the State highway system.

Policies supporting connectivity focus on promoting grid street layouts to allow for through movement and good connections between and within neighborhoods; short blocks offer a choice of routes and enable more direct connections, which decreases trip length and increases the likelihood of choosing to bike or walk; and to reduce cul-de-sacs wherever possible, which lead to circuitous travel and concentrates traffic along fewer streets. Variations from the traditional grid can allow for diagonal and curvilinear streets as well as larger or smaller blocks for maximum flexibility and improved connectivity. Additionally, connectivity policies support neighborhood street design that is human-scaled and not excessively wide and incorporate traffic safety measures, including setting speed limits, providing signage, and designating truck routes to reduce commercial traffic through neighborhoods.

## **Equity**

An equitable and safe circulation network, especially for residents of disadvantaged communities (DACs), ensures that the network meets the needs of all Los Banos residents.<sup>1</sup> The policies in this Element commit the City to prioritizing traffic safety, connectivity, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements to make streets and sidewalks safe and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

## **Roadway Network**

The core of Los Banos' circulation network is the roadway system, which all modes of transportation depend on to some degree. In Los Banos, this system is based on a traditional grid pattern in the downtown surrounded by a radial pattern of arterial roadways. Regional access is provided by State Route (SR-) 152 and SR-165 on the west and north. The hierarchy of street classifications is shown on Figure 4-1.

## **Street System**

The roadway system in Los Banos consists of a hierarchy of street types that are commonly referred to as functional classifications. The functional classifications are as follows:

**Freeways.** Freeways are divided highways designed for the unimpeded flow of large traffic volumes. Most freeways are four lanes, or two lanes each direction. Access to a freeway is rigorously controlled through the use of interchanges, and the type of interchange depends on the kind of intersecting roadway (surface street, rural road, another freeway, urban arterial, etc.). There are currently no freeways within the Planning Area, but the future SR-152 by-pass north of the city will fall under this category.

**Highways.** Highways are designed to carry heavy traffic volumes at speeds of 40 to 55 miles per hour. Highways link Los Banos with other nearby urban areas. Access is limited, crossings are generally signalized at grade or grade-separated, parking is not allowed, and a continuous median separates lanes moving in opposite directions. SR-152 and SR-165 are the two highways in Los Banos.

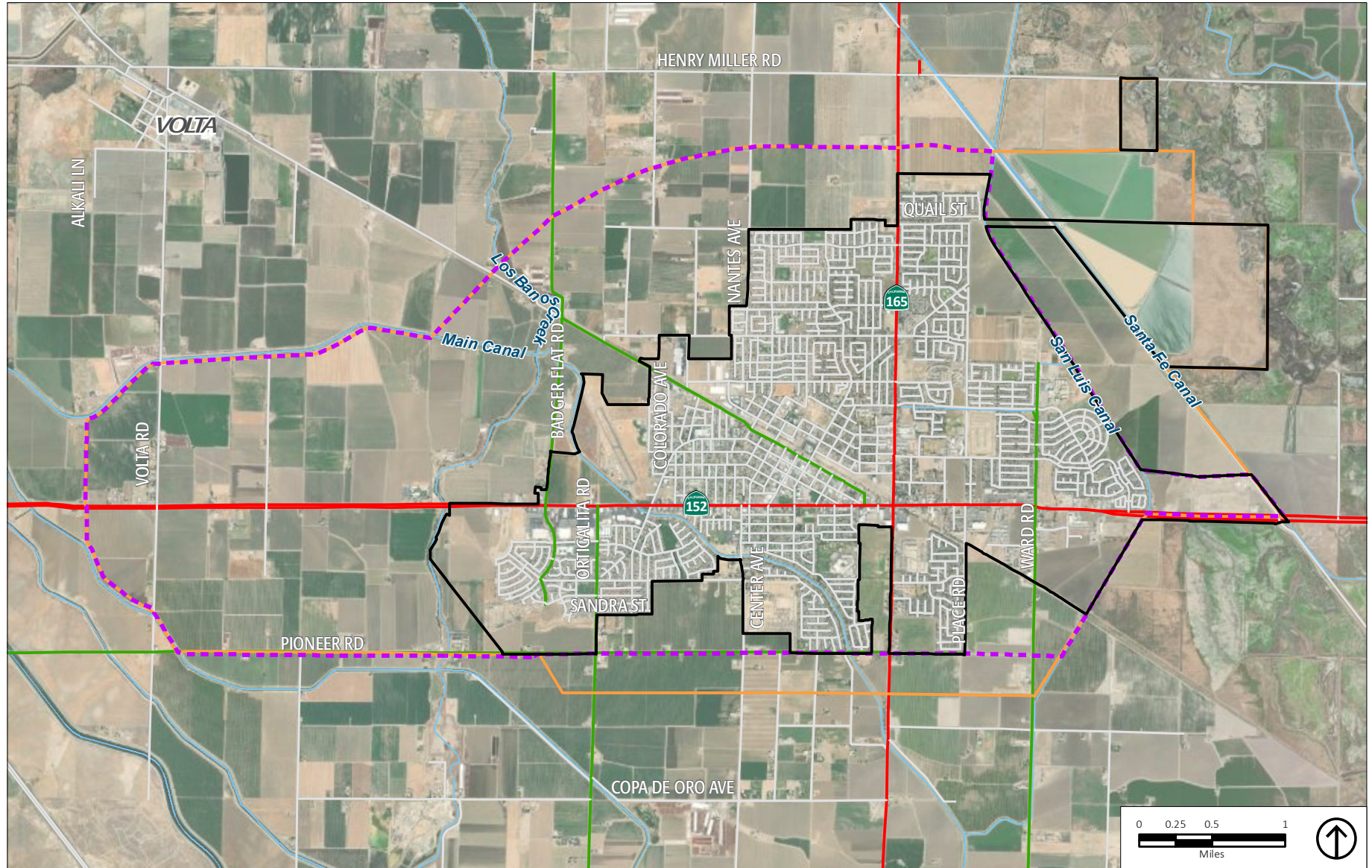
**Major Arterials.** Arterials are designed to move large volumes of traffic between highways and other arterials in Los Banos and to adjacent jurisdictions. Major arterials are access-controlled roadways emphasizing mobility between major portions of the city and to regional freeways and highways. Major arterials do not provide on-street parking.

---

<sup>1</sup> See the explanation of disadvantaged communities, as defined by Senate Bill 1000, in Chapter 1, Introduction, under "Planning for Environmental Justice."



CIRCULATION



Source: Merced County 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- City Limit
- Roads
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- State Highway
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Arterial

Figure 4-1  
Existing Roadway Network



**Minor Arterials.** Minor arterials provide mobility through the city and access to major residential, employment, and activity centers. Minor arterials provide two travel lanes, one in each direction. Driveway access is minimized, consistent with the primary function of arterials to move through traffic. Bike lanes, landscaped strips, sidewalks, and transit facilities may also be accommodated within the right-of-way of minor arterials, depending on the right-of-way width. On-street parking may be appropriate for some minor arterials that emphasize accessibility over mobility.

**Collectors.** Collector streets provide a link between neighborhood streets and arterials. Collectors provide two travel lanes, one in each direction, in addition to any bicycle lanes where called for in the Los Banos Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan. On-street parking may be provided if sufficient width is available. Collectors also provide access to adjacent properties, so driveway access is generally discouraged but not restricted. Landscaped strips, sidewalks, and transit facilities may also be accommodated depending on the right-of-way available.

**Local Streets.** The primary function of local streets is to provide direct access to adjacent properties. Local streets provide two travel lanes, landscaped strips, and sidewalks. On-street parking may be restricted.

## Level of Service

The level of service (LOS) concept is generally used to measure the amount of traffic that a roadway or intersection can accommodate, based on how many vehicles use the facility (volume) versus how many vehicles the facility is designed to carry (capacity). LOS ranges from LOS A, or free-flow conditions, to LOS F, or congested conditions. These conditions are generally described in Table 4-1.

## Vehicle Miles Traveled

California Senate Bill (SB) 743, passed in 2013, requires that the environmental impacts of new development on transportation network performance be evaluated based on greenhouse gas emissions rather than on traffic congestion, or LOS, at local intersections and roadways. This shift also recognizes that improvements that can help more cars move faster, such as widening roadways and intersections, may often be detrimental to other roadway users, like people walking or biking. Therefore, cities are evolving away from the traditional LOS metric towards a multi-modal perspective based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

While LOS describes local impacts at a specific location, VMT describes citywide or regional impacts by measuring the number of miles traveled by motor vehicles within an area. Considering VMT enables the City to focus transportation planning efforts on reducing commute lengths and improving alternative transportation options.



**Table 4-1: Level of Service Criteria for Intersections**

Level of Service	Type of Flow and Delay	Maneuverability	Stopped Delay/Vehicle (Seconds)		
			Signalized	Unsignalized	All-Way Stop
<b>A</b>	<b>Stable Flow</b> Very slight delay. Progression is very favorable, with most vehicles arriving during the green phase not stopping at all.	Turning movements are easily made, and nearly all drivers find freedom of operation.	≤10	≤10	≤10
<b>B</b>	<b>Stable Flow</b> Good progression and/or short cycle lengths. More vehicles stop than for LOS A, causing higher levels of average delay.	Vehicle platoons are formed. Many drivers begin to feel somewhat restricted within groups of vehicles.	>10 and ≤20	>10 and ≤15	>10 and ≤15
<b>C</b>	<b>Stable Flow</b> Higher delays resulting from fair progression and/or longer cycle lengths. The number of vehicles stopping is significant, although many still pass through the intersection without stopping.	Back-ups may develop behind turning vehicles. Most drivers feel somewhat restricted.	>20 and ≤35	>15 and ≤25	>15 and ≤25
<b>D</b>	<b>Approaching Unstable Flow</b> The influence of congestion becomes more noticeable. Longer delays may result from some combination of long cycle lengths or high volume-to-capacity ratios. Many vehicles stop, and the proportion of vehicles not stopping declines. Individual cycle failures are noticeable.	Maneuverability is severely limited during short periods due to temporary back-ups.	>35 and ≤55	>25 and ≤35	>25 and ≤35
<b>E</b>	<b>Unstable Flow</b> Generally considered to be the limit of acceptable delay, with poor progression, long cycle lengths, and high volume-to-capacity ratios.	There are typically long queues of vehicles waiting upstream of the intersection.	>55 and ≤80	>35 and ≤50	>35 and ≤50
<b>F</b>	<b>Forced Flow</b> Generally considered to be unacceptable to most drivers. May also occur at high volume-to-capacity ratios. Poor progression and long cycle lengths may also be major contributing factors.	Jammed conditions. Back-ups from other locations restrict or prevent movement. Volumes may vary widely, depending principally on the downstream back-up conditions.	>80.0	>50.0	>50.0

Source: Omni-Means, 2006.

# 4 CIRCULATION

## Planned Roadway Improvements

This Element describes major street improvements planned or programmed to meet the City’s circulation goals. Figure 4-2 shows the planned roadway system implemented through 2042. Table 4-2 and Figure 4-3 show and describe specific planned roadway improvements across Los Banos’ circulation system.

The planned improvements, coupled with policies requiring transportation demand management and traffic analysis for new development, will result in generally acceptable LOS.

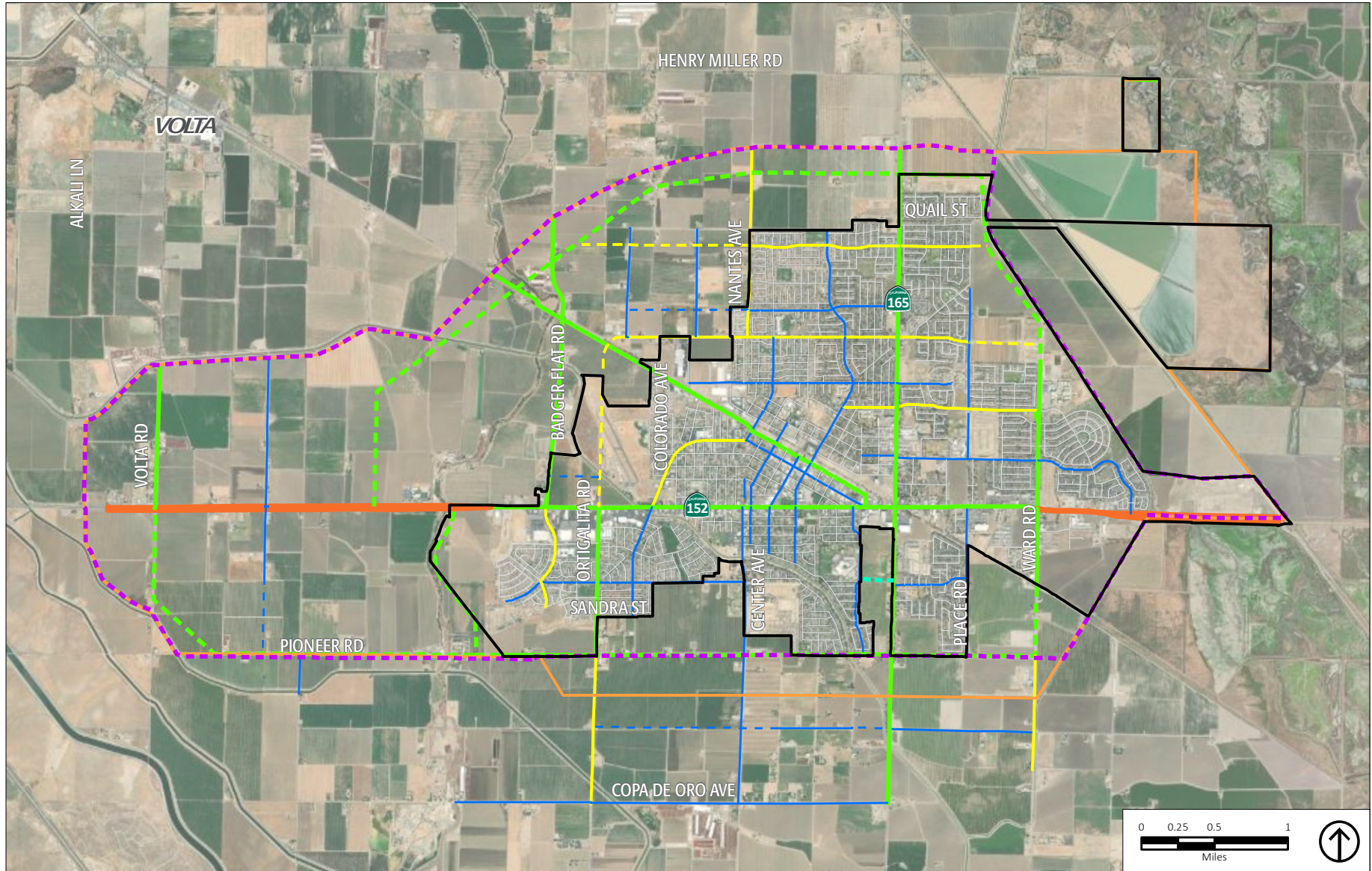


TABLE 4-2: PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	
Roadway	Improvement Description
SR-165 / Mercey Springs Road	Widen to four-lane divided arterial from Henry Miller Road to Copa del Oro Road
SR-152 / Pacheco Boulevard	Provide improvements consistent with the Pacheco Boulevard Complete Streets Plan
Pioneer Road	Widen to four-lane arterial from Volta Road to Ward Road.
Pioneer Road	Provide improvements consistent with the Pioneer Road Complete Streets Plan
Ward Road	Widen to four-lane arterial from Pacheco Boulevard to Pioneer Road
10th Street	Extend 10th Street from G Street to H Street
Ingomar Grade Road / H Street	Widen to four-lane arterial
Badger Flat Road	Widen to four-lane arterial from Henry Miller Road to Pioneer Road
Overland Avenue	Realign intersection of Overland Avenue and H Street
Page Avenue	Extend Page Avenue between South 11th Street and Mercey Springs Road to connect to Scripps Drive
Place Road	Extend Place Road from Pacheco Boulevard to San Luis Street
SR-152 and SR-165	Provide improvements to intersection of SR-152 and SR-165
Future SR-152 Bypass Frontage Road	Reserve right-of-way for new frontage road just south of the future SR-152 bypass from Pacheco Boulevard to Ward Road

Source: Kittelson Associates, 2022.



CIRCULATION



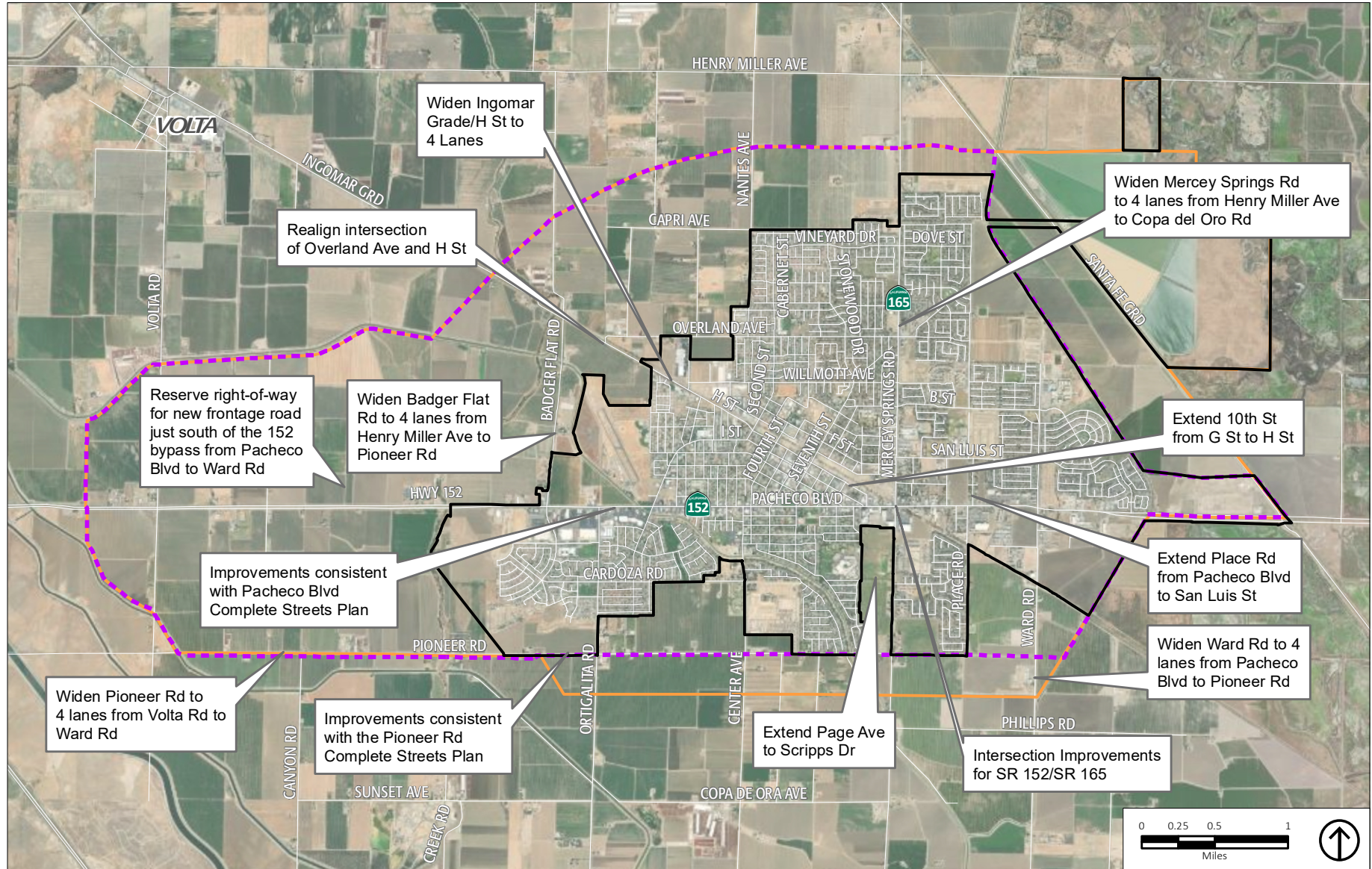
Source: Merced County 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- City Limit
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Local
- Highway
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Planned Major Arterial
- Planned Minor Arterial
- Planned Collector
- Planned Local Road

Figure 4-2  
Planned Roadways 2042



CIRCULATION



Source: Merced County 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

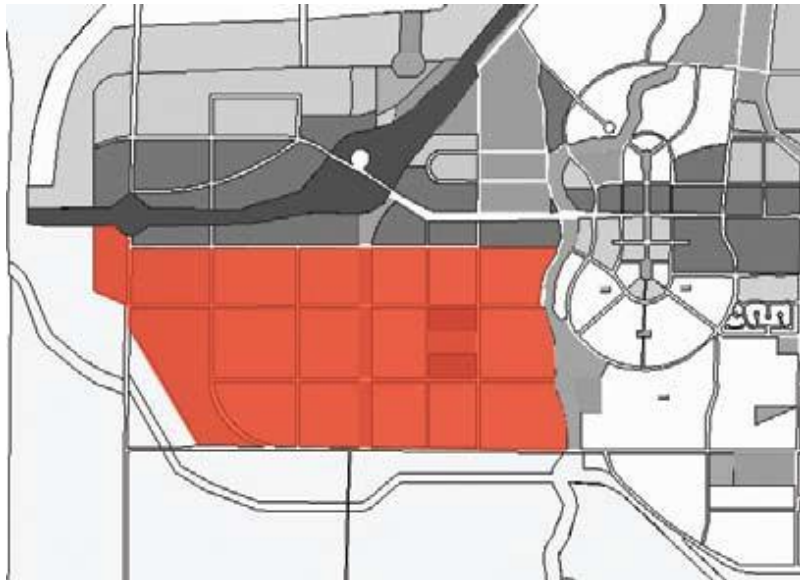
Figure 4-3  
Planned Improvements



### ***Transportation Management for the Westside Subarea***

Under General Plan 2042, the Westside subarea is envisioned to provide more than 2,200 acres of developable land where many new jobs will be located (see Figure 4-4). As such, many employees who work in this area will use Pacheco Boulevard, Pioneer Road, and the proposed SR-152 bypass to travel to work. This will create an adverse impact on peak-hour traffic on these roads, so this General Plan includes policies that have specific requirements for traffic analysis and transportation demand management for new projects in this area.

**Figure 4-4 Westside Subarea**



### **Public Transit**

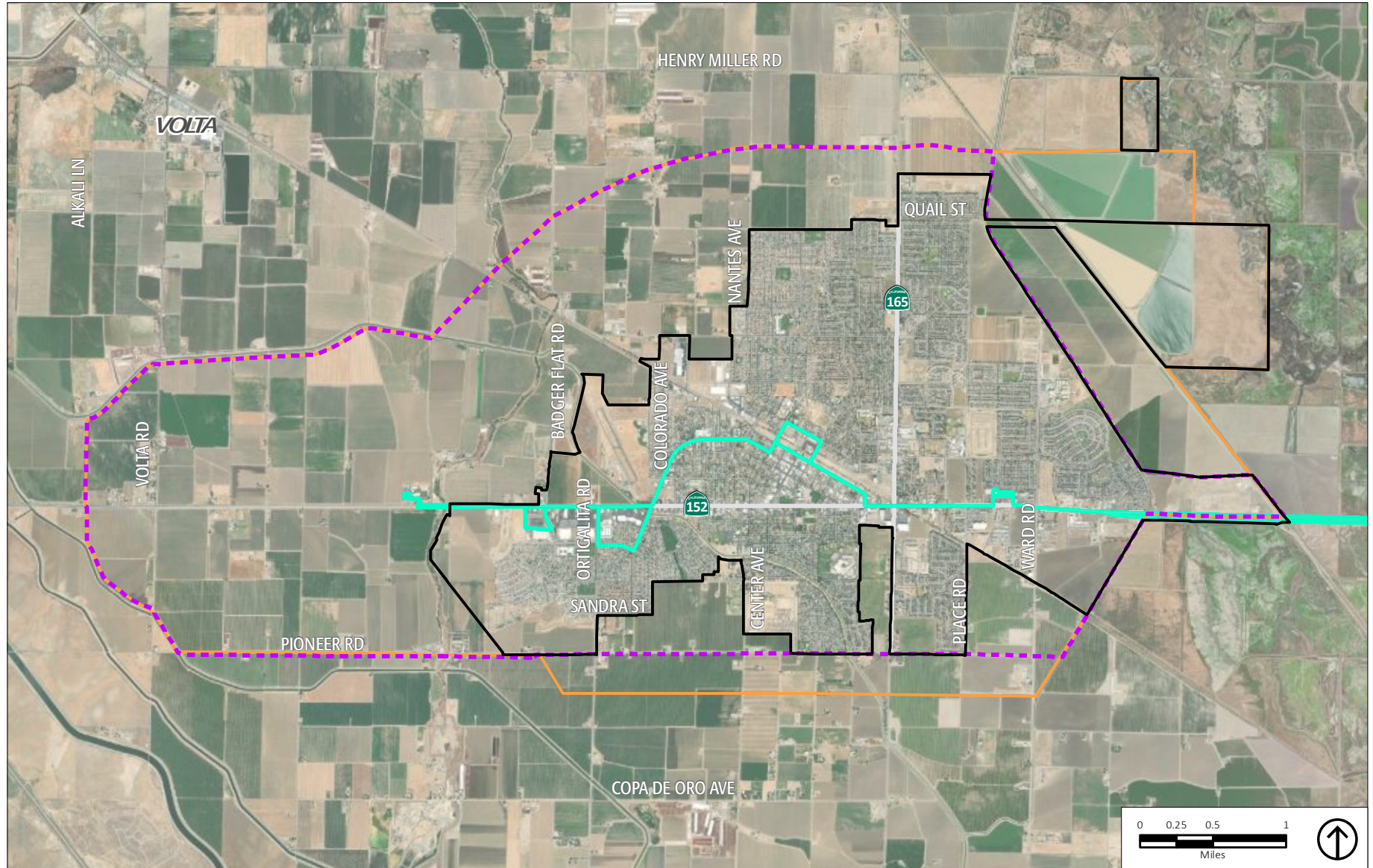
Public transit in Los Banos is currently served by the Merced Regional Transit System, also known as “The Bus”. The Bus is administered and governed by the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County. The system provides both fixed route and Dial-A-Ride (door-to-door) transit services throughout all of Merced County. Transportation centers include the Greyhound Bus Station, and the Los Banos Airport.

The Los Banos Commuter Route is the bus route that travels between the Cities of Los Banos and Merced, with stops at El Nido and Dos Palos in between. The Bus has several stops within the Planning Area along Pacheco Boulevard, in Downtown, and the Los Banos Campus of Merced College, as illustrated on Figure 4-5. Most of the outlying residential areas of Los Banos are not served by the Bus.

### **Pedestrian Circulation**

The pedestrian circulation network consists of all public paths dedicated to pedestrian travel, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, accessible ramps, trails, and overhead and underpass crossings. This network is supported by signalized intersections, signage, and accessibility features that make pedestrian travel safe and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

CIRCULATION



Source: Merced County, 2019; Merced County Association of Governments, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- City Limit
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Merced Transit Authority Los Banos Commuter Bus Route

Figure 4-5  
Bus Routes



The pedestrian network is described in the Los Banos Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan, which is the active transportation plan (ATP) for Los Banos. It assesses the existing pedestrian network of Los Banos, identifies gaps, proposes new pedestrian facilities, and identifies improvements and funding sources to implement them. The ATP also includes Safe-Routes-to-Schools (SRTS) improvements to create safe pathways for youth and students traveling between home and school.

Pedestrian travel is an active mode of transportation that reduces greenhouse gases and improves public health. Los Banos' flat topography and warm climate provide favorable conditions for walking or bicycling as a transportation option. Circulation policies promote development and improvement of pedestrian facilities across Los Banos.

## Bicycle Circulation

In Los Banos, existing and planned bikeways and bicycle parking facilities are identified in the Los Banos Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan. The General Plan provides goals and policies for supporting and promoting bicycle facilities in Los Banos.

Bicycle route classifications are shown in Table 4-3. Figure 4-6 shows existing and planned bicycle facilities for Los Banos. Figure 4-7 shows the multimodal transportation network of Los Banos combining the existing public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.

## Parking

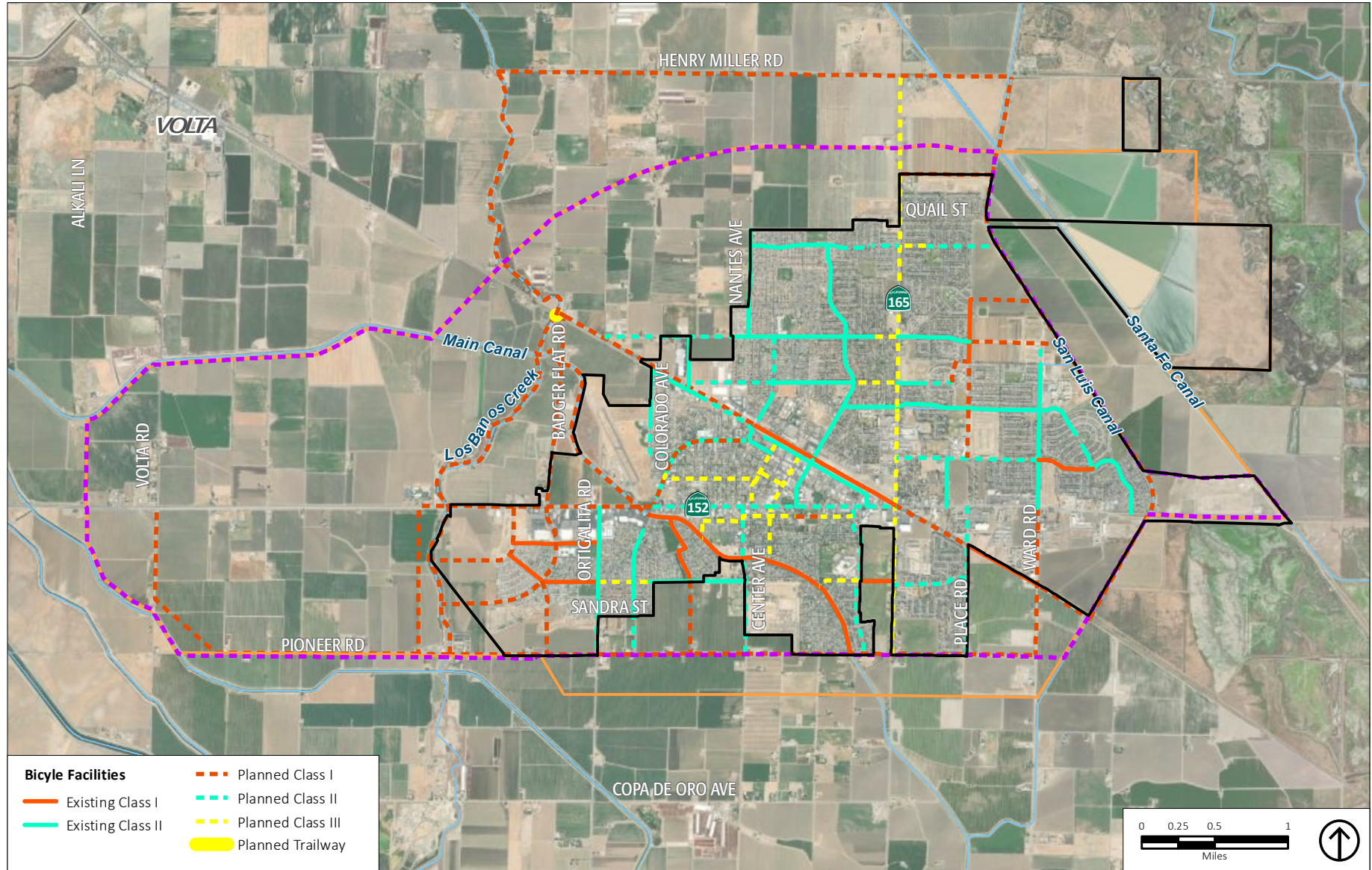
Parking is regulated by the City Zoning Ordinance (Title 9 of the Municipal Code). This Element provides policies for maintaining and improving parking conditions in Los Banos.



**TABLE 4-3: BIKEWAY CLASSIFICATIONS**

Classification	Function	Access Control	Right-of-Way
<b>Class I - Bike Paths</b>	Provide exclusive right-of-way for bicyclists with cross-flows by motorists minimized.	Where crossing or access from the bicycle path is required, the crossing should be grade-separated or occur at pedestrian crossings. Mid-block crossings should assign right-of-way through signing or signalization.	Minimum of 8 feet for a two-way facility. The minimum paved width for a one-way bike path is 5 feet. A minimum 2-foot-wide graded area shall be provided adjacent to the pavement, but a 3-foot graded area is recommended. Where pedestrian activity is expected, a minimum of 12 feet for a two-way facility should be provided.
<b>Class II - Bike Lanes</b>	Provides preferential use of the paved area of roadway for bicyclists by establishing specific lines of demarcation between areas reserved for bicycles and motorists.	Access should be controlled to minimize intersection and driveway crossings. At intersections where there is a bike lane and an actuated signal, it is desirable to install bicycle-sensitive detectors. Push button detectors force the bicyclists to stop and actuate the push button.	Class II bike lanes are one-way facilities. On roadways with parking, the bike lane is between the parking area and the traffic lane with 5-foot minimums for the bike lane. Where parking is permitted and not marked, minimum width is 12 feet. On roadways where parking is prohibited, a minimum of 5 feet is required, including a 2-foot gutter.
<b>Class III - Bike Routes</b>	Provides a right-of-way designated by signs or permanent markings and shared with pedestrians and motorists.	Access should be controlled to minimize driveway crossings.	The width of a Class III bike route varies. It is desirable to have a minimum bicycle travel way; however, due to various constraints/conditions, a minimum width has not been established.
<b>Class IV - Separated Bike Lanes</b>	Provides buffered right-of-way for bicyclists separated from vehicle traffic by raised features such as medians, landscaping, bollards, flex posts, or other element.	Access should be controlled to minimize intersection and driveway crossings. At intersections where there is a bike lane and an actuated signal, it is desirable to install bicycle-sensitive detectors. Push button detectors force the bicyclists to stop and actuate the push button.	Minimum 2 feet width for buffer on streets where there is no parking, minimum 3 feet width for buffer on streets where this is parking, minimum 5 feet width for buffer where there is accessible parking. Minimum 5 feet width for each bicycle lane.

CIRCULATION



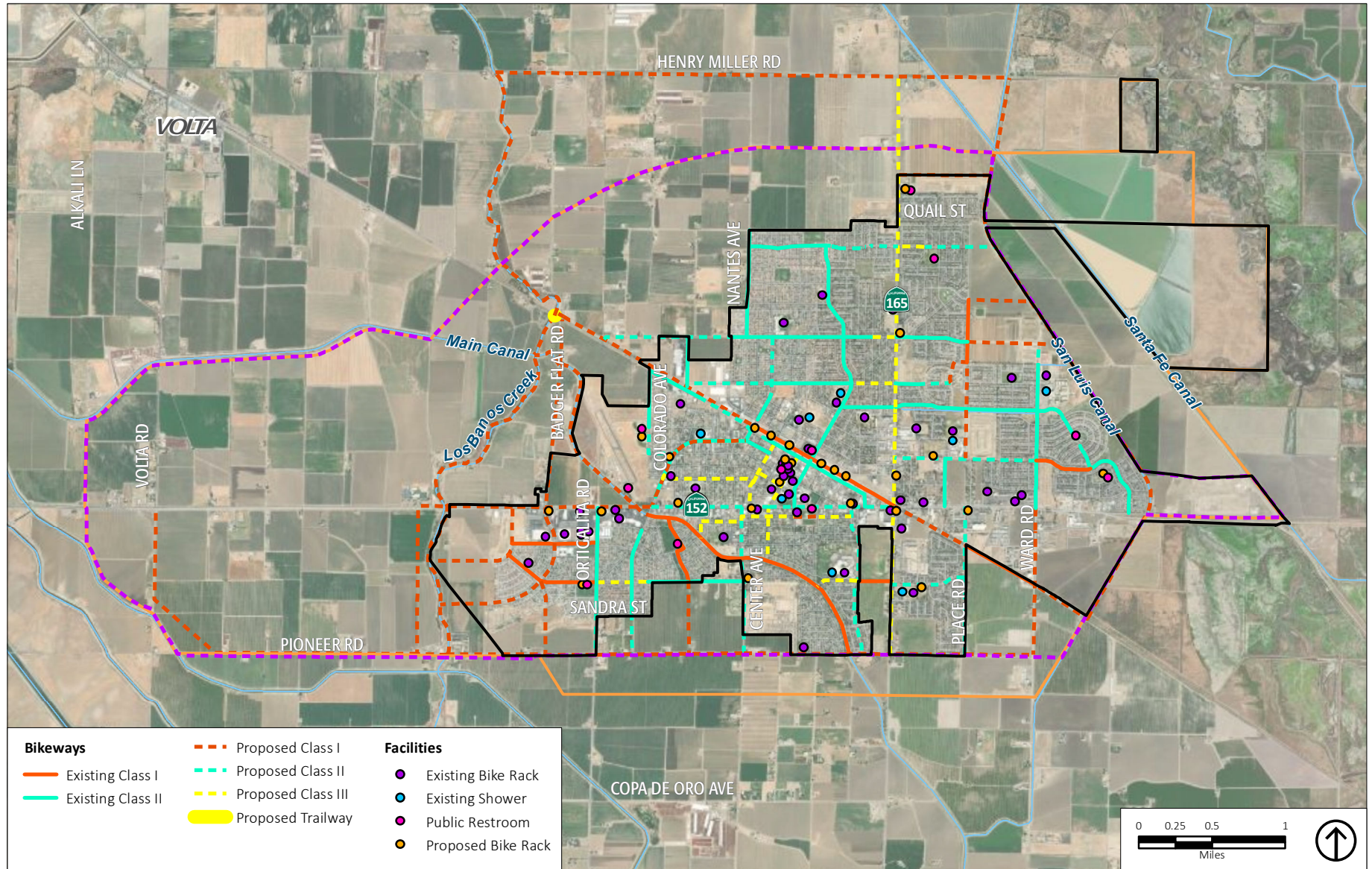
Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit    Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)    Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 4-5  
Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities



CIRCULATION



Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit    Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)    Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 4-7  
Multimodal Network

## Goods Movement

### **Aviation**

Los Banos currently has a small, public-use aviation airport west of downtown to serve city residents and communities in the vicinity.

The Los Banos Municipal Airport has an approximately 3,800-foot runway with a full return taxiway. The airport is open 24 hours and receives small twin engine passenger aircrafts as well as corporate or private jets. There are a number of T-hangers and a pilot's lounge on airport grounds.

The City is considering whether to relocate the airport in the future.

### **Railway**

Los Banos currently does not have active railway lines within the Planning Area. The city was historically connected to Fresno and Tracy via a railway line operated by the Union Pacific Railroad Company. The railway was primarily used to transport agricultural produce and goods and was abandoned in the early 1990s when trucking became more economical. Today, a part of this railway has been converted into the Henry Miller Plaza at the junction of Sixth Street and H-Street.



*Jets parked at the Los Banos Municipal Airport. (Source: airport-data.com)*

The State of California High-Speed Rail Authority is constructing a high-speed rail network linking San Francisco, Oakland, and Sacramento in the north—with service to the Central Valley—to Los Angeles and San Diego in the south. The northbound route will connect to Sacramento; the southbound will connect to an interchange that will take travelers west towards Gilroy and the San Francisco Bay Area or south to Madera, Fresno, and Los Angeles. The current planned alignment of the high-speed rail corridor will pass just north of Los Banos, east-west parallel to Henry Miller Road. The closest station to Los Banos will be in Merced, adjacent to SR-99 and the Union Pacific Railroad line on Martin Luther King Jr. Way/SR-59 and the SR-99 interchange.



The High-Speed Rail Authority and the City of Merced will be developing a station area plan before proceeding to construction.

## **Truck Routes**

The roadway system in Los Banos carries a substantial number of trucks moving goods. The General Plan designates specific truck routes that are designed to allow truck traffic to pass through the city with minimal impact on residential neighborhoods as well as local vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Figure 4-8 shows the designated truck routes in Los Banos.

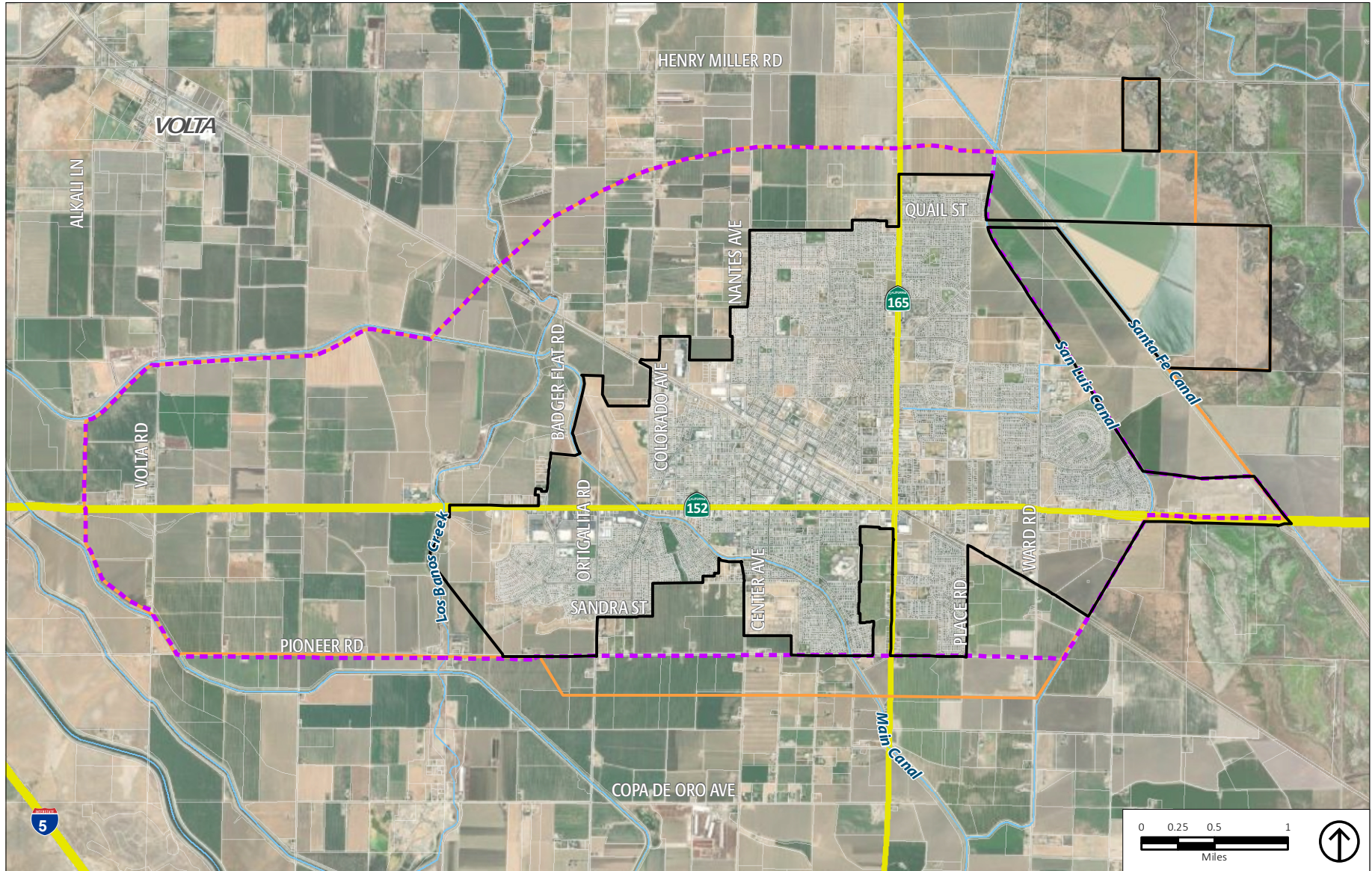
## **Environmental Justice**

State law (SB 1000) requires this General Plan to advance environmental justice by addressing the needs of DACs. Though the law does not prescribe specific policies the City must adopt, policies and actions must cover the following.

- **Reduction of pollution exposure, including improvement of air quality.** The Circulation Element provides policies to promote active transportation that would reduce transportation modes that produce greenhouse gas emissions and thereby increase exposure to particulate matter and air contaminants. The Element regulates truck routes to minimize pollution impacts on DACs.

- **Promotion of physical activities.** Along with the Los Banos Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan, circulation policies in this Element promote the creation and support of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, which would encourage physical activity. Additional policies prioritize connectivity to open space and recreation for DACs.
- **Promotion of public facilities.** Circulation policies prioritize improving connectivity between DACs and public facilities, such as schools and community facilities. Additionally, policies prioritize circulation network improvements for DACs to ensure vehicular, pedestrian, bicycling, and public transit facilities that meet the needs of the community.
- **Promotion of food access.** Circulation policies prioritize improving multimodal connectivity between residents of DACs and access to healthy foods, such as grocery stores and farmers' markets.
- **Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.** Circulation policies prioritize circulation and complete streets improvements for DACs.

CIRCULATION



Source: California Department of Transportation, 2020; Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
  Truck Routes

Figure 4-8  
Truck Routes

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### Roadway Planning and Design

#### GOAL C-1

Promote safe and efficient vehicular circulation for all modes and users.

#### POLICIES

Policy C-P1.1 Plan, design, and maintain complete streets in Los Banos, which balance safe access to all users, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and people of all ages and abilities, and which integrates all appropriate modes of transportation into an effectively functioning system.

Policy C-P1.2 Require all new developments to provide right-of-way and improvements consistent with the General Plan street designations and City cross-street section standards.

Policy C-P1.3 Provide for greater street connectivity by:

- Incorporating in subdivision regulations requirements for a minimum number of access points to existing collector streets or neighborhood streets for each development;
- Encouraging traffic circles and roundabouts over signals where feasible;
- Requiring bicycle and pedestrian connections from cul-de-sacs to nearby public areas and main streets; and
- Requiring new residential communities on undeveloped land planned for urban uses to provide stubs for future connections to the edge of the property line. Where stubs exist on adjacent properties, new streets within the development shall connect to these stubs.

Policy C-P1.4 Promote the installation of landscaping in center medians and at major intersections where feasible.





**ACTIONS**

*Action C-A1.1* Work with the Merced County Association of Governments and Caltrans to implement technologies that can improve the performance, reliability, and safety of the transportation system, such as signal coordination, centralized traffic control, red-light and speed enforcement cameras, and real-time travel information.

*Action C-A1.2* Adopt street standards that provide flexibility in design, especially in residential neighborhoods. Revise right-of-way and pavement standards to reflect adjacent land use and/or anticipated traffic and permit reduced right-of-way dimensions where necessary to maintain neighborhood character.

*Action C-A1.3* Adopt updated street standards to reflect complete streets principles, focusing on bicycle and pedestrian safety and multi-modal uses.

*Action C-A1.4* Plan for a frontage road on the south side of the SR-152 bypass to facilitate traffic circulation.

*Action C-A1.5* Work with regional and State agencies to plan for the future SR-152 bypass.

*Action C-A1.6* Establish landscaping standards along the SR-152 bypass and the Pioneer Road/Ward Road/West Connector.

**Minimizing Emissions and Congestion**

**GOAL  
C-2**

**Make efficient use of existing transportation facilities and, through coordinated land use planning, strive to improve accessibility to shops, schools, parks, and employment centers for all users, and reduce total vehicle miles traveled per household to minimize vehicle emissions and save energy.**

**POLICIES**

*Policy C-P2.1* Develop and manage the roadway system to obtain segments at level of service (LOS) C and intersections at LOS D or better for two-hour peak periods (a.m. and p.m.) on all major

# 4 CIRCULATION

roadways and intersections in Los Banos. This policy does not extend to neighborhood streets, freeways, or State highways and their intersections, where Caltrans policies apply. Exceptions to LOS policy may be allowed by the City Council in areas, such as Downtown, where allowing a lower LOS would result in clear public benefits.

Policy C-P2.2 Require traffic impact studies for all proposed new developments that will generate significant amounts of traffic (100 or more peak-hour trips).

Policy C-P2.3 Collect and analyze traffic volume data on a regular basis and monitor current intersection and roadway segment levels of service on a regular basis. Use this information to update and refine the City's travel forecasting model so that estimates of future conditions are more strongly based on local travel behavior and trends.

Policy C-P2.4 Require applicants for proposed projects in the Westside subarea, as shown in Figure 4-4, to provide data to the City traffic engineer for site trip calculations and reduce their building square footages if the number of trips exceeds that allowed to gain development approval.

Policy C-P2.5 Achieve State-mandated reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by requiring development and transportation projects to meet specific VMT metrics. In the event a proposed project does not meet these metrics, require measures to reduce the additional VMT associated with the project, consistent with the City's adopted thresholds.

Policy C-P2.6 Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through measures such as improvements to public transportation and carpooling and offering safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy C-P2.7 Consider, on a case-by-case basis, how to shift travel demand away from the peak period, especially in those situations where peak-traffic problems result from a few major generators.



**Policy C-P2.8** Promote and encourage carpool, vanpool, and guaranteed ride home with employers to discourage single occupancy vehicles while encouraging alternative modes of transportation such as carpooling.

## ACTIONS

**Action C-A2.1** Participate in regional efforts to develop guidelines for calculating the projected VMT associated with future development projects and transportation improvements. The guidelines also should cover administration, screening criteria, and appropriate Transportation Demand Management measures and monitoring procedures. All VMT metrics should be routinely reassessed and revised as needed to reflect changing conditions.

**Action C-A2.2** Study the feasibility of a Trip Reduction Ordinance (TRO) to support achievement of the State-mandated reductions in VMT.

**Action C-A2.3** Perform routine, ongoing evaluation of the efficiency of the urban street traffic-control system, with emphasis on traffic signal timing,

phasing, and coordination to optimize traffic flow along arterial corridors. Use traffic control systems to balance arterial street utilization (e.g., timing and phasing for turn movements, peak period, and off-peak signal timing plans).

**Action C-A2.4** Establish and implement additional programs to maintain adequate peak-hour level of service at intersections and along roadway segments as circumstances warrant.

## Public Transit

### GOAL C-3

Provide a wide variety of transportation alternatives and modes to serve all residents and businesses to enhance the quality of life.

### POLICIES

- Policy C-P3.1 Promote the use of public transit for daily trips to schools, employment, and medical appointments.
- Policy C-P3.2 Work with Merced County Transit to situate transit stops and hubs at locations that are convenient for transit users and promote increased transit ridership through the provision of shelters, benches, bike racks on buses, and other amenities.
- Policy C-P3.3 Ensure that new development is designed to make transit a viable choice for residents. Design options include:
- Have neighborhood focal points with sheltered bus stops;

- Locate medium- to high-density development near streets served by transit; and
- Link neighborhoods to bus stops by continuous sidewalks or pedestrian paths.

Coordinate with Caltrans and Merced County Transit to identify and implement Park and Ride sites with convenient access to public transit.

### ACTION

- Action C-A3.1* Develop a multi-modal transit system map integrating bicycle, public transportation, pedestrian, and vehicle linkages within the city to ensure circulation gaps are being met.





### ***Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation***

**GOAL  
C-4**

**Promote bicycling and walking as alternatives to the automobile.**

**POLICIES**

Policy C-P4.1 Develop bicycle lanes, routes, and paths consistent with the Los Banos Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan.

Policy C-P4.2 Increase bicycle safety by:

- Sweeping and repairing bicycle lanes and paths on a regular basis;
- Ensuring that bikeways are delineated and signed in accordance with Caltrans' standards and lighting is provided, where needed;
- Providing bicycle paths or lanes on bridges and overpasses;
- Ensuring that all new and improved streets have bicycle-safe drainage grates and are free of hazards, such as uneven pavement and gravel;

Policy C-P4.3 Give bicyclists equal treatment in terms of provisions for safety and comfort on arterials and collectors as vehicles.

Policy C-P4.4 Require secure and convenient bicycle parking at large commercial and industrial employer sites.

Policy C-P4.5 Require new development in office parks, commercial districts, and residential neighborhoods to include a series of continuous walkways so they connect to one another.

# 4 CIRCULATION

Policy C-P4.6 Provide for pedestrian-friendly zones in conjunction with the development, redevelopment, and design of mixed-use neighborhood core areas, the Downtown area, schools, parks, and other high-use areas by:

- Providing intersection “bump outs” to reduce walking distances across streets in the Downtown and other high-use areas;
- Providing crosswalks at all signalized intersections;
- Providing landscaping that encourages pedestrian use; and
- Constructing adequately lit and safe access through subdivision sites.

Policy C-P4.7 Ensure that roadway improvement projects address mobility and accessibility for bicyclists and/or pedestrians.

Policy C-P4.8 Support implementation of the adopted Los Banos Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan in coordination with the County’s Regional Bikeway Plan.

Policy C-P4.9 Reduce driveway conflicts along Pacheco Boulevard consistent with the Pacheco Boulevard Complete Streets Plan.

## Parking

### GOAL C-5

Foster practical parking solutions.

### POLICIES

Policy C-P5.1 Promote side setbacks in new residential development to provide parking for recreation vehicles where feasible.

Policy C-P5.2 Promote shared parking for mixed-use projects, passive solar on parking structures to generate energy for parking lot lighting, and pervious parking paving to improve groundwater recharge.

### ACTIONS

Action C-A5.1 Assess and address parking needs of downtown commercial businesses by:



- Considering the need for the construction of a new parking structure for public convenience and to promote economic development; and
- Establishing parking exemptions for small stores and restaurants.

*Action C-A5.2* Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow shared parking for mixed uses where peak parking demands do not overlap.

### Goods Movement

#### GOAL C-6

Provide for safe, efficient goods movement within Los Banos that supports the local economy.

#### POLICIES

Policy C-P6.1 Continue to participate in the planning and construction process for the California High-Speed Railway.

#### ACTIONS

*Action C-A6.1* Study the feasibility of relocating the airport outside the urban area, with access to the State highway system, at a location that will minimize environmental impacts.

*Action C-A6.2* Work with the County to update the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan to accommodate a relocated airport and its operations.

*Action C-A6.3* Establish, maintain, and enforce truck routes in the city to provide direct access to Commercial, Office, and Industrial areas and to avoid disadvantaged communities. This program should include standards for designating truck routes, signage, and enforcement mechanisms.

## Environmental Justice

### GOAL C-7

Provide a safe and accessible multimodal circulation network for disadvantaged communities that improves health and reduces pollution exposure.

### POLICIES

- Policy C-P7.1 In capital projects and planning documents, prioritize the implementation of street safety projects in disadvantaged communities.
- Policy C-P7.2 Support improvements to bikeways and sidewalks in disadvantaged communities to make active transportation more accessible, user-friendly, and safer, while decreasing vehicle speeds, congestion, and air pollution.
- Policy C-P7.3 Prioritize energy-efficient street lighting programs in disadvantaged communities, particularly at parks, transit stops, alleyways, pedestrian paths, along commercial corridors, and near high-density and medium-density housing.

Policy C-P7.4 Work with local transit providers to establish and maintain routes and services, including accessible transit services, that provide disadvantaged communities with convenient access to employment centers, shopping, healthy food outlets, and services. Support extended hours of transit service to serve shift workers.

Policy C-P7.5 Provide convenient ways for residents to notify the City when transit shelters and benches or other seating at transit stops in disadvantaged communities are not in a state of good repair, especially along commercial corridors and near high-density and medium-density housing. The City will relay this information to Merced County Transit.

### ACTIONS

Action C-A7.1 Develop and implement Safe-Routes-to-School plans to ensure that routes for safe walking, bicycling, and transit to schools exist. Prioritize the development and maintenance of sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting, bicycling infrastructure, transit stop amenities, traffic





calming, and other safety improvements in disadvantaged communities.

*Action C-A7.2*

Promote programs where people can apply for partial and/or temporary street closures for amenities such as parklets and community events such as farmers’ markets, block parties, or bicycle and pedestrian events.

***Funding for Improvements***

**GOAL  
C-8**

**Provide stable and adequate funding for roadway construction and maintenance.**

**POLICIES**

- Policy C-P8.1 Continue to require that new development pays a proportionate share of the costs of street and other traffic and local transportation improvements based on traffic generated and impacts on traffic service levels, consistent with State laws.
- Policy C-P8.2 Continue to require city-wide traffic impact fees to provide additional funding for transportation improvements needed to serve new development. Provide for automatic adjustments in traffic fees to reflect increases in construction costs (e.g., materials, rate of inflation).
- Policy C-P8.3 Continue to pursue creative sources of funding for transportation improvements.

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

*The Parks, Open Space, and Conservation Element provides guidance for development and management of the City's parks and recreation facilities, public open space, and cultural and historic resources. This Element addresses conservation of natural resources, including biological resources, agriculture, vegetation, habitat, special-status species, water resources, mineral resources, air quality, climate change, and environmental justice.*

## Contents

- 1 Parks and Recreation
- 2 Open Space Resources
- 3 Biological Resources
- 4 Agricultural Resources
- 5 Water Resources
- 6 Mineral Resources
- 7 Cultural Resources
- 8 Air Quality
- 9 Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases
- 10 Environmental Justice
- 11 Goals, Policies, and Actions

## Parks and Recreation

Los Banos is committed to creating and maintaining a park system that meets peoples' recreational needs and contributes to the city's positive image. The presence of well-designed and accessible parks and community facilities is essential to the health and well-being of city residents.

### ***Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities***

The Parks and Facilities Division of the City of Los Banos maintains a park system that embraces a wide variety of neighborhood, community, and pocket parks. Table 6-1 lists existing parks and their acreages and Table 6-2 summarizes existing parkland by park type. Figure 6-1 illustrates existing parks and recreation facilities.



Los Banos' parks and facilities are established through the Park Master Plan, which provides the following classifications.

- **Pocket Park.** A pocket park is intended to serve the needs of a specific neighborhood within a quarter-mile radius. Pocket parks are usually fully landscaped with trees and turf and usually less than one acre in size. Besides residential neighborhoods, they can also be found Downtown, serving shoppers or employees as places to rest or eat.
- **Neighborhood Park.** A neighborhood park, typically 1 to 10 acres in size, provides basic recreation facilities for one or more neighborhoods. They can also be attached to a storm basin, in which case they can be as large as 25 acres in size. The service area typically is a half-mile radius and should avoid crossing any major natural or human-made barriers that inhibit access to the park, such as major arterial roads, canals, or sound walls.
- **Community Park.** A community park is typically between 7 to 10 acres in size and is intended to provide recreational, athletic, and open space needs within a service area of 1 to 3 miles.

- **Specialized Park or Facility.** A specialized use park is a recreation area or facility intended to provide the city with a specific activity or major use and are generally not determined by size. This category may include elements from neighborhood and community parks and is intended to provide amenities that could serve visitors from outside the city. A specialty park or facility could be a building used for meetings or recreational programs; a memorial park or plaza smaller than five acres; or can be a specific use such as a skate park, BMX track, or dog park.
- **Trail.** A trail is a linear path that is along a linear feature, such as a waterway, roadway, or railroad right-of-way. A trail could also be an easement that leads to canal or rail trails. The Rail Corridor Trail is an example.

Neighborhood and community parks have a variety of facilities, including sports fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, picnic areas, and children's play areas, as well as grass areas for informal play. Currently, there is a joint-use agreement between the school district and the City for facility use, which requires agreement on intensity of use, costs, and other factors. Table 6-2 summarizes the total acreage and ratios of parkland type per 1,000 residents.

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION



**TABLE 6-1: EXISTING PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Name	Acreage	Name	Acreage	Name	Acreage
<b>Pocket Park</b>		<b>Neighborhood Park</b>		<b>Community Park</b>	
Big Page Park	1.23	Citrus Terrace II Park	2.4	7th St. Ballpark	5.92
Catholic Park	0.26	College Greens Park	5.1	AG Sports Complex	49.87
Citrus Terrace I Park	0.3	Cresthills Park	4.21	Colorado Ballpark	9.33
City Park (on Ninth Street)	1.03	Elena Talbott Basin Park	9.19	Pacheco Park	6.02
Davis Park	0.7	Gardens V Basin Park	15.87	<b>Specialty Park or Facility</b>	
Gardens 1 Park	0.75	Jo-Lin Basin Park	4.16	Airport Park	0.35
Gardens 3 Park	0.86	Meadowlands II Park	4.38	Flagpole Park	0.63
Little Page Park	0.18	Meadowlands III Park	3.44	Henry Miller Plaza	2.63
Meadowlands I Park	0.61	Meadowlands Basin Park	24.4	Los Banos Community Center	4.31
Meadowlands Greenway	1.01	Neighborhood (Sandstone) Park	0.54	Miller and Lux Building	0.15
Oliveira Courtyard (Southbrook Park)	0.7	Oliveira Park	8.72	Veterans Memorial Park	2.16
Presidential Park	0.43	Orchard Terrace	1.17	Wolfsen Park	2.04
Rancho Dos Amigos Park	0.62	Rancho Dos Amigos Greenway	1.8	<b>Trails</b>	
Regency Tot Lot Park	0.47	Ranchwood Park	4.55	H.G. Fawcett Canal Trail	19.0
Village Park	0.55	Regency Lot D Park	4.98	Lindemann Trail	4.5
		Skylark Park and Expansion	7.42	Page Avenue Extension Trail	0.84
		Verona Basin Park	6.75	Rail Trail	6.91
		Vineyard Basin A Park	6.27	Rail Trail Extension	6.67
		Vineyard Basin B Park	8.95		
		Vineyard Basin C Park	8.58		

Source: City of Los Banos, 2021.





**TABLE 6-2: SUMMARY OF EXISTING PARK TO POPULATION RATIOS**

Park Type	Acreeage	Current Ratio (Acres/1,000 population)
Pocket Parks	9.34	0.2
Neighborhood Parks	131.27	3.1
Community Parks	75.79	1.8
Special Parks and Facilities	11.35	0.3
Trails	36.60	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>264.35</b>	<b>6.2</b>

***Proposed Parks and Trails***

This General Plan will serve as a guide for park and recreation master planning by the Planning and Public Works Departments.

The parks proposed in the General Plan respond to the expressed desire of Los Banos residents for more green spaces, greater access to parks and recreational spaces, and an enhanced urban environment.

As shown in Table 6-2, the City currently has approximately 264 acres of neighborhood, community, and pocket parks in the city serving a population of roughly 42,900 residents. This translates into a park ratio of just over 6 acres per 1,000 residents.

The City is studying and pursuing several planned community parks. The 2021 Parks Master Plan provides concepts for these major efforts. These include a regional sports facility in the southwest area of the city with multiple sports fields, courts, picnic areas, and open space; an aquatics center Downtown with indoor swimming and recreational facilities; and renovation and expansion of some existing parks. The Ag Sports Complex in the northeast area of the city is proposed for expansion to potentially accommodate sports fields, a dog park, trails, and other recreational facilities. Colorado Park in the northwest area of the city would be renovated with new picnic areas, ballcourts, and hardscaped areas. New parkland areas are to be acquired by the City through private and public funding sources or through development contributions. In all, the General Plan aims to provide a park within a quarter-mile access for each resident and seeks to achieve a parkland goal of at least 5 acres per 1,000 residents to help accomplish this.

**Rail Trail**

The Rail Trail is a linear park that extends from the center of Downtown to southeast Los Banos. The Rail Corridor Trail was born out of a collaborative effort between City government, community leaders, and business owners to revitalize downtown after the Union Pacific Railroad company abandoned its right-of-way in the mid-90s. The entire trail is made up of three segments. The primary paved segment is known as the Rail Trail Corridor and extends from 2nd Street to Mercey Springs Road, roughly following H-Street, a diagonal street that connects downtown with development east and west of the city. This connects to an unpaved segment called the Rail Trail Extension from Mercey

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION



Springs Road to Place Road. The final segment is called Lindemann Trail and is a paved trail that extends from Place Road to Ward Street.

## **HG Fawcett Parkway (CCID Main Channel)**

The Central California Irrigation District (CCID) Main Channel presents an excellent opportunity to create an extensive linear park system in Los Banos. The channel traverses the city in a roughly northwest to southeast direction and connects the Gardens V Basin Park Pacheco Boulevard and several schools along its path. HG Fawcett Parkway follows the segment of the canal between I Street and Pioneer Road. It offers a multi-use path, several picnic areas, and pedestrian bridge. Residents from different neighborhoods fish regularly in the channel or walk their dogs. As the city becomes more developed, the HG Fawcett Parkway could be extended to link new neighborhood parks and community centers north and south of Pioneer Road to jobs, shopping, and services along Pacheco Boulevard and in future Employment Campus areas.

## **Los Banos Creek Trail**

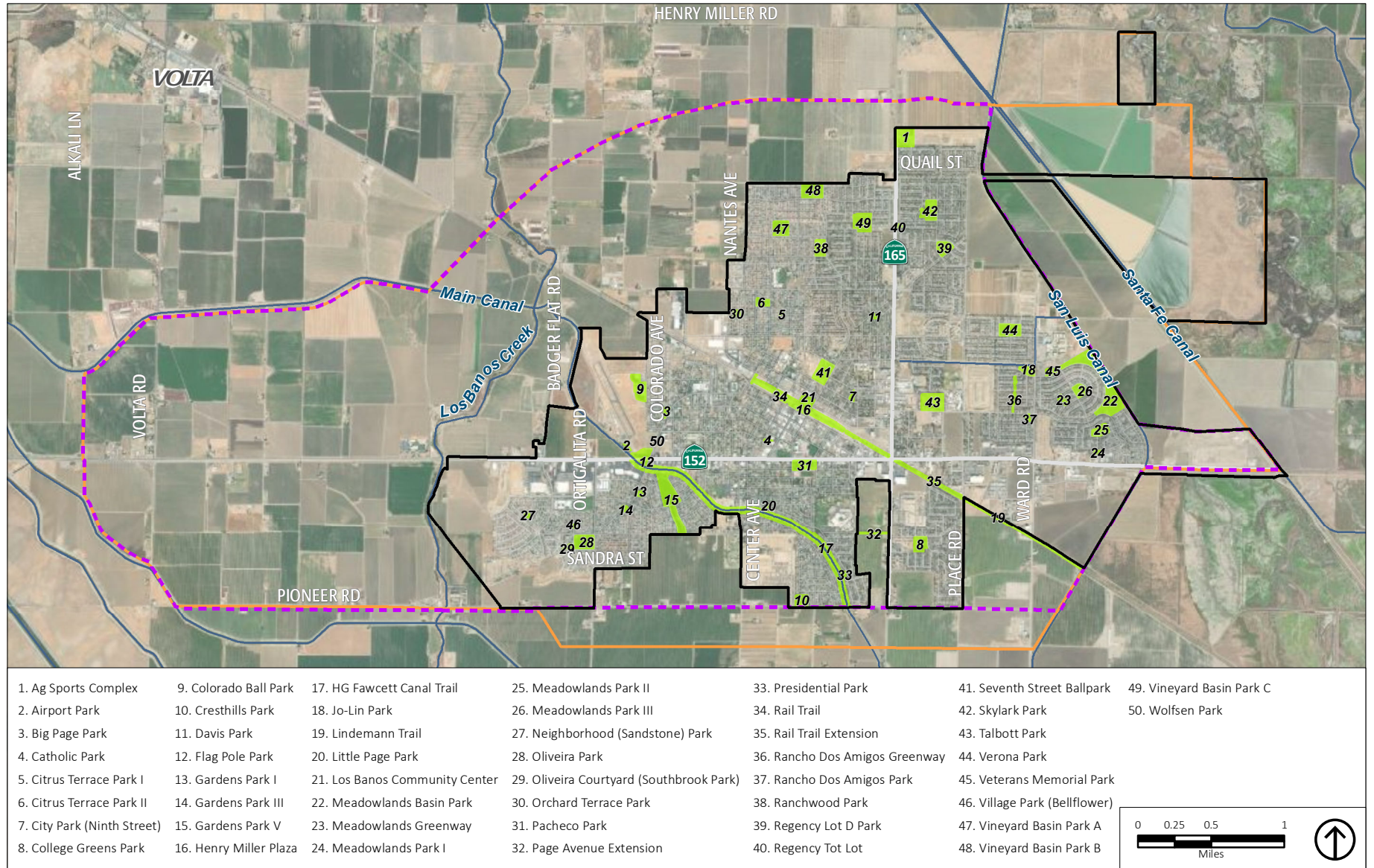
The Los Banos Creek Trail is a planned trail envisioned to traverse the city in a north/south direction and was traditionally a major watershed and flood catchment for the eastern and southeastern part of the city. Currently, the creek runs along the edge of urban development and adjoins several agricultural land parcels. When this part of the city develops in the future, the creek will become a major ecological green belt and circulation element. It has potential for multi-purpose recreation, water recharge, and

habitat restoration facilities. Additionally, portions of the trail system could serve as a buffer between proposed commercial uses to the west of the creek and residential development at the other side. The current Land Use Element proposes a Community/City Park at the junction of the creek and the HG Fawcett Parkway. This interconnection will provide a linear trail system that ties together the creek area with southern and southeastern portions of the city.

## **Open Space Resources**

Los Banos' setting—in an agricultural county laced with creeks and waterways—includes natural resources that are important not only for aesthetic value, but also for environmental quality, habitat protection, and water resources. In addition, preserving the general configuration of surrounding hills, creeks, and natural topographic features fosters a sense of place for the community, and this affords current and future residents an understanding of the city's natural setting and native topography. The Land Use Element (Chapter 3 of the General Plan) is responsible for designating which land is open space. This section describes the different types of open spaces that the General Plan is required to address.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION



Source: City of Los Banos, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2022.

Figure 6-1

City Limit    
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)    
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)    
  Parks    
**Parks and Recreation Facilities**



## ***Classification of Open Space***

State planning law (California Government Code Section 65560) provides a structure for the preservation of open space by identifying the following open space categories:

- **Open space for public health and safety**, including, but not limited to, areas that require special management or regulation due to hazardous or special conditions. This type of open space might include earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, floodplains, watersheds, high fire risk zones, areas required for protecting water quality and water reservoirs, and areas required for protecting and enhancing air quality.
- **Open space for the preservation of natural resources**, including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, such as: habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecological and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays, estuaries, and wetlands.
- **Open space for outdoor recreation**, including, but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic, and cultural value; areas particularly suited for recreation purposes, such as access to rivers and streams; and areas that serve as links between major recreation and open space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.
- **Open space used for the managed production of resources**, including, but not limited to, rangeland, agricultural lands, and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of groundwater basins; marshes, rivers, and streams that are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits.
- **Open space to shape and limit urban form**, including, but not limited to, areas meeting other open space objectives, such as greenbelts and open space corridors established to implement community design goals or objectives. Open space established for the State Route (SR-) 152 Bypass and those under the jurisdiction of the CCID and Grassland Water District (GWD), may also be classified as open space to shape and limit urban form.
- **Open space for military support**, including, but not limited to, areas adjacent to military installations and training routes, and areas underlying restricted airspace. Los Banos currently does not have and is not located near military installations or training routes.





- **Open space for tribal resources**, including, but not limited to, public land containing any Native American sanctified cemetery, place of worship, religious or ceremonial site, or sacred shrine; and Native American historic, cultural, or sacred sites that are listed or may be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1.

In addition to these categories, California Government Code Section 65302 also requires that the General Plan identify existing natural features and ecosystem processes that the City can incorporate into strategies to increase resiliency to climate change. In Los Banos, these include mature trees, creeks and waterways, riparian areas, and groundwater recharge processes.

Protection of open space resources is determined based on the ecosystem fragility, location, hazard potential, regulatory constraints, and other pertinent factors. In some types of open space, development is prohibited entirely, while in others, some development may be allowed if it is clustered to respect and protect the integrity of the land and the environment.

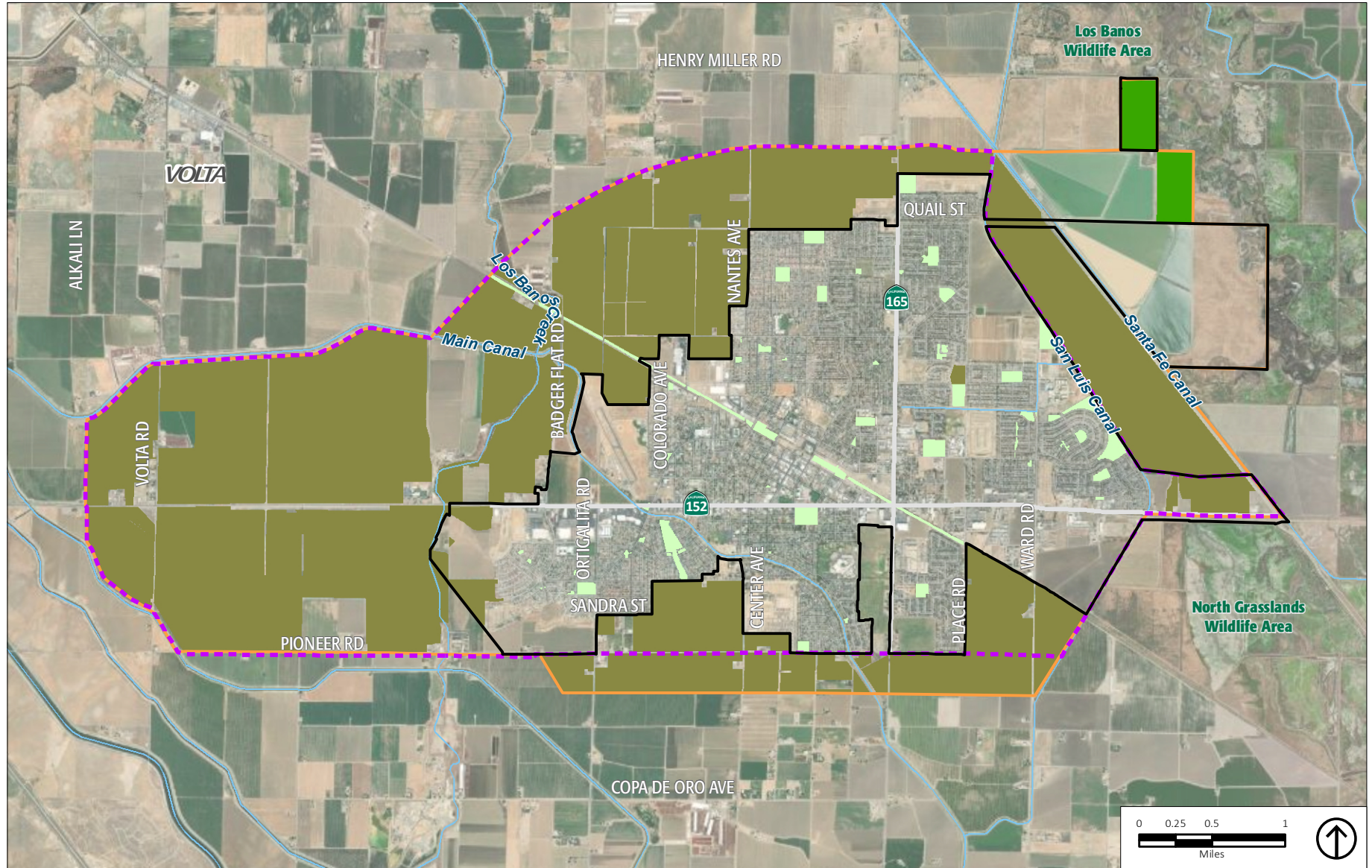
Determination of how these open space resources are to be protected will be made on a case-by-case basis following standards and review procedures established in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances consistent with General Plan policies.

### ***Existing Open Space***

Los Banos is primarily surrounded by agricultural open space and undeveloped lands in the unincorporated areas of the county. Open space for agricultural production currently exists in the western parts of the city near the municipal airport, and around the edges of its sphere of influence (SOI). The Grassland Ecological Area (GEA) and Pacific Flyway to the east of Los Banos are examples of open space for the preservation of natural resources and are discussed in more detail in the following section on Biological Resources. Figure 6-2 shows existing open space in Los Banos.

Open space policies listed in the Goals, Policies, and Actions section of this Element are intended to protect open space resources and improve open space management and access to these areas, as appropriate.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION



Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- City Limit
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Park
- Recreational
- Agricultural

Figure 6-2  
Open Space Resources

## Biological Resources

The City of Los Banos lies at the edge of the larger San Joaquin Valley ecoregion, with portions of two key open space areas, the GEA and the Pacific Flyway, neighboring to the east. The GEA encompasses the Los Banos Wildlife Area and the North Grasslands Wildlife Area and includes native valley grassland, marshes, and riparian areas. It is considered the largest wetland complex in California, vital to migratory birds and many other species. This part of the Planning Area includes a variety of unique natural communities that range from vernal pools/wetland communities to riparian woodlands. The region's temperate weather and rich alluvial soil developed from sediment deposited by the San Joaquin River and its tributaries support a variety of amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

### **Vegetation and Habitat**

The majority of the Planning Area consists of mixed agriculture, varying from row crops to orchards, vineyards, and irrigated pasture. There are also patches of disturbed areas along roadsides and irrigation ditches, and non-native annual grasslands on fallow parcels. A mixed riparian woodland occurs along Los Banos Creek, and fresh emergent wetlands are found in the far eastern and northern portions of the Planning Area, near the GEA. Wetlands are ecologically complex habitats that support a variety of plant and animal life. The GEA boundary neighboring the area is a non-jurisdictional border established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the purpose of designating an area in which public easements for wetland conservation may be purchased. This area of year-round and seasonal wetlands, riparian corridors, and native grasslands is

part of the largest contiguous block of wetlands remaining in the Central Valley and provides habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals, including many species that have been federally or state listed as threatened, endangered, or sensitive. These habitats are managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), GWD, and various private owners. The GEA is a major wintering ground for ducks and other migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. By some estimates, the wetlands near the Planning Area are used by 30 percent of the Pacific Flyway wintering duck population.

### **Special-Status Species**

Special-status species are those plants and animals that, because of their acknowledged rarity or vulnerability to habitat loss or population decline, are recognized by federal, state, or other agencies and organizations as deserving special consideration. There are 70 special-status plant and animal species with potential to occur in the Planning Area, including alkali milk-vetch (*Astragalus tener*), Lemmon's jewel flower (*Caulanthus lemmonii*), vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), and giant garter snake (*Thamnophis gigas*).



## ***Wildlife Corridors***

Wildlife corridors link large blocks of habitat and allow safe movement for mammals and other wildlife species from one habitat area to another. Wildlife corridors can include greenbelts, refuges, underpasses, riparian areas, and creeks. Habitat for wildlife in and around Los Banos is fragmented by irrigation canals, SR-152 and SR-165, and urban development. Wildlife may move through agricultural fields and non-native annual grasslands when vehicle traffic and agricultural machinery are quiet. The mixed riparian woodland along Los Banos Creek may also serve as a wildlife corridor but is constrained by the narrow width of the corridor and lack of continuous vegetation cover. As noted above, the managed wetlands of the GEA, to the east of the Planning Area, are very important habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

## **Agricultural Resources**

Agriculture dominates the land surrounding Los Banos and is an important contributor to the local economy, history, and character.

### ***Agriculture and Working Farmlands***

Like most cities in the San Joaquin Valley, Los Banos was built on agricultural land. Although the City's economy once thrived on the production of agricultural uses, the City has since become urban, diversified, and modern. Nevertheless, agriculture is still an important asset to the region, as evidenced by the surrounding dairy farms and nut orchards, which boost the region's economy. The gross value of Merced County's agricultural production in 2016 was almost \$3.5 billion. The County's top-five commodities are milk (\$940 million), almonds (\$579 million), chickens (\$381

million), cattle and calves (\$297 million), sweet potatoes (\$232 million), and tomatoes (\$152 million).

Agricultural land can be found within the city limit and within the SOI. The Planning Area includes prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, farmland of local importance, unique farmland, and grazing land, as classified by the California Department of Conservation. The majority of agricultural land within the Planning Area is classified as Prime Farmland. Table 6-3 lists the number of acres within the city limit and SOI in each classification. Figure 6-3 illustrates the distribution of working farmlands in the Planning Area and Prime Farmland surrounds the city limit. However, the Department of Conservation's data reflect conditions as of 2016. Since that time, some limited pieces of land may have been developed or may now be under development review. Nevertheless, the data provide a broad picture of the agricultural resources within Los Banos.

### ***Community Agriculture***

Community agriculture is agriculture that is supported locally by residents and seeks to serve the needs of the community. The primary example of this is the community garden. Another type is community-supported agriculture, where residents and community members subscribe to a local farm that directly delivers fresh foods and produce to them on a regular basis. Given Los Banos' agricultural roots and history, policies in this Element seek to economically and socially benefit Los Banos by supporting a self-sustaining community agricultural network within Los Banos.





**TABLE 6-3: EXISTING FARMLAND**

Type	Acres in City Limit	Acres Outside City Limit in SOI	Total Acres	Percentage
Urban/ Built-up Land	4,662	363	5,025	35%
Prime Farmland	759	4,495	5,254	36%
Farmland of Statewide Importance	32	1,285	1,317	9%
Farmland of Local Importance	492	145	637	4%
Unique Farmland	99	797	895	6%
Grazing Land	356	174	530	4%
Other Land	391	482	874	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,791</b>	<b>7,769</b>	<b>14,559</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Department of Conservation: Division of Land Resource Protection.

### ***Agriculture Protection***

Agricultural land within the Los Banos Planning Area will be converted to urban uses during the life of this General Plan to accommodate projected residential and employment growth. For that reason, the Land Use Element of the General Plan establishes an Urban Growth Boundary and encourages compact development to reduce unnecessary conversion of agricultural lands.

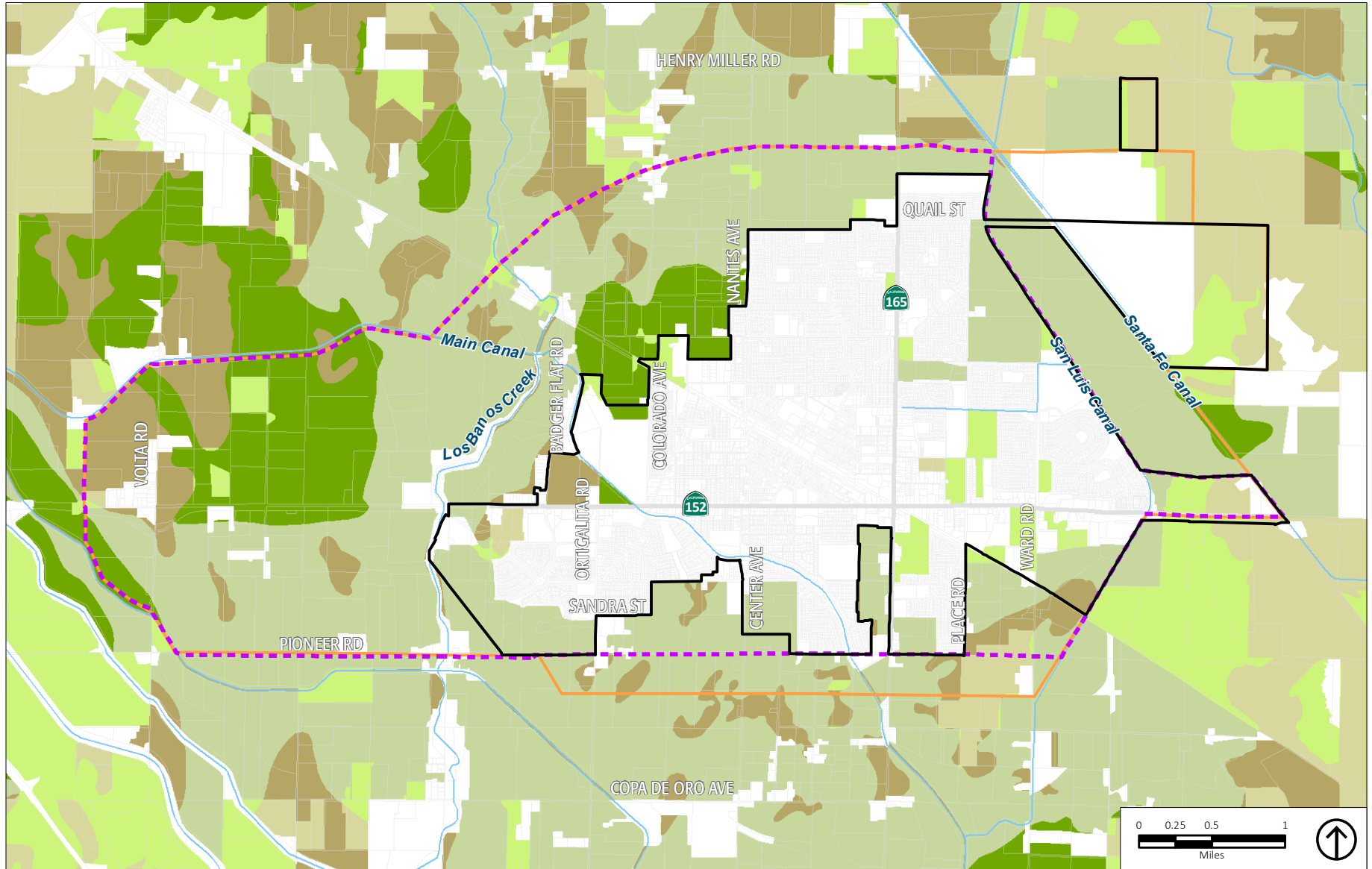
### **Water Resources**

The Los Banos Planning Area is within the Middle San Joaquin-Lower Chowchilla watershed, which lies within the greater San Joaquin Hydrologic Basin. Water enters the subbasins by way of riverbeds throughout the valley. The Planning Area is traversed by two natural surface water features, the Los Banos Creek and Mud Slough. Through the years, both water courses have been altered for flood control and have had their volume reduced upstream. Three human-made water courses—the CCID Main Canal, San Luis Canal, and the Santa Fe Canal, run through or near the Planning Area. These canals are used for both drainage conveyance and irrigation purposes.

### ***Groundwater Basins***

The City of Los Banos currently gets water solely from groundwater sources. Los Banos extracts its groundwater from the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, which is part of the larger San Joaquin Valley Basin. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin has been designated by the Department of Water Resources as in critical overdraft.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION



Source: Department of Conservation 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- City Limit
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Farmland of Local Importance
- Unique Farmland
- Grazing Farmland

Figure 6-3  
Agricultural and Working Farmlands



This chapter focuses on water as a natural resource to be protected and conserved. Existing and future groundwater supply for human use, including groundwater management requirements and Los Banos' role as a groundwater supply agency, is described in Chapter 8, Public Facilities and Services.

### **Groundwater Quality**

In general, groundwater quality throughout the region is suitable for most urban and agricultural uses with only local impairments. The primary constituents of concern are nitrate, hexavalent chromium, selenium, sulfate, Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), arsenic, boron, chloride, and boron.

Although many city wells have low concentrations of arsenic, the city's drinking water meets the federal and state standards for arsenic of 0.010 milligrams per liter (mg/l). Arsenic occurs naturally in some rocks and soil, while agricultural pesticides and herbicides can contribute to contamination levels. Naturally occurring hexavalent chromium has been detected in elevated concentrations in some of the city's wells. It currently meets California drinking water standards of 0.05 mg/l; however, the State is in the process of lowering the standard to 0.010 mg/l. Groundwater from wells with elevated concentrations is blended with groundwater from other city wells to ensure compliance with the drinking water regulations. Because of the positive effects of recharge of Los Banos Creek on groundwater quality, higher-quality groundwater can be found at the western portion of the Planning Area.

### **Groundwater Recharge**

Groundwater recharge at Los Banos occurs primarily from deep percolation of applied irrigation water and rainfall. The rate of recharge depends on the permeability of the surface and subsurface materials. Surface water tends to flow towards the ancestral San Luis Creek Bed and the Los Banos Creek area. To a lesser extent, they also flow to various human-made irrigation canals and irrigation channels south and west of the city. Treated wastewater from the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is also discharged into pastureland, which helps to replenish the underground water supply. Additionally, the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (SJREC) Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) group is implementing groundwater sustainability projects that would increase groundwater recharge by 50,000 acre-feet per year (AFY), including the Los Banos Creek Diversion Facility, Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Program, and the Los Banos Creek Storage Project.

Goals and objectives for recharging, conserving, recharging, and seeking new primary and backup sources will all reduce the vulnerability and increase reliability of the city's water resources.

### **Mineral Resources**

According to the California Department of Conservation, State Mining Geology Board, there are no known significant mineral resources within the Planning Area.<sup>1</sup> The Planning Area contains parts of San Luis Ranch alluvium and Modesto alluvium, known

<sup>1</sup> Department of Conservation: State Mining and Geology Board, *Mineral Land Classification of Merced County*, 1999.

mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. According to the California Division of Mine Reclamation, sand and gravel is currently mined within portions of the Los Banos Creek Fan, located southwest of the Planning Area.<sup>2</sup> Although further exploration within the Planning Area could result in the reclassification of specific localities, no mineral resources have been historically exploited or are being currently exploited commercially within the Planning Area.

## Cultural Resources

The lands encompassed by the Planning Area have a long and rich history of human habitation, supported by archaeological evidence of prehistoric cultures and a small number of historic buildings. The existence of both archaeologically sensitive areas and historic buildings in Los Banos requires the need for policies that preserve such aspects of the city's heritage.

In addition, several California laws protect tribal, archaeological, and historical resources. According to an inventory conducted by the Central California Information Center at California State University Stanislaus (CSUS), the Planning Area contains important historical resources, including various nationally and state-registered historic sites, as well as both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites.

## *Tribal and Archaeological Resources*

Human habitation in the area of present-day Los Banos dates back to at least 1000 BC. Los Banos is within the indigenous territory of the Nopchinchi tribelet of the Northern Valley Yokuts, who displaced earlier Costanoan and Miwok residents of the San Joaquin Valley. By the early nineteenth century, the population of the Northern Valley Yokuts was estimated at 30,000, concentrated along the San Joaquin River and its main tributaries in tribelets of up to 300 people. Sustenance included seeds, acorns, tule roots, fishing, and hunting for fowl.

The Northern Valley Yokuts first encountered Spanish exploratory missions in the early 1800s. Large numbers of Yokuts peoples were taken to the San José, Santa Clara, Soledad, San Juan Bautista, and San Antonio missions. The succeeding period is characterized by Neophytes running away from the harsh mission system, being pursued by punitive expeditions, and joining with unconverted groups to raid mission territories. The native population declined significantly from malaria and other diseases, as well as from violence and displacement from transient gold prospectors and settlers who arrived to farm the Central Valley.

According to records maintained by the Central California Information Center (CCIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) at California State University, Stanislaus, approximately 35 percent of the Planning Area has been studied for cultural resources, identifying 16 archaeological sites. These include habitation sites, task-oriented camps, and

---

<sup>2</sup> Assembly Bill 3098 Listing, as of October 16, 2006.





burial sites. In particular, the area around and to the south of Mud Slough is rich in archaeological resources. It is likely that there are undiscovered and unrecorded archaeological resources in the Planning Area.

Unlike historic sites, the location of archaeological sites is restricted by the federal Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) to prevent looting, vandalism, and destruction of archaeological resources.

### ***Historical Resources***

Historic cultural resources generally include buildings, roads, trails, bridges, canals, and railroads usually associated with the time period beginning with the first European and/or American contact. The first significant European settlement of California began during the Spanish Period (1769 to 1821) with the establishment of missions and presidios to solidify Spanish economic, military, political, and religious control over the Alta California territory. Following the Mexican Revolution and independence from Spain in 1821, the vast land holdings of the missions in California were divided into large land grants called *ranchos*. Soon after the end of the Mexican-American war in 1848, the 1849 California Gold Rush brought thousands of miners and settlers to California.

The 1850s and 1860s saw rapid growth in farming and cattle ranching, which sometimes came into conflict. Notable early cattlemen and pioneers of this era included Henry Miller, Charles Lux, Uriah Wood, W.J. Stockton, and Charles W. Smith. Los Banos Village, a few miles east of the present-day City of Los

Banos, was one of only two towns on the west side of the Sierra Nevada in the lower Central Valley during the early 1870s amidst extensive stock ranches for cattle and sheep, but new communities sprang up as railroads and canals came to the area.

By 1871, Henry Miller formed the San Joaquin and Kings River Canal and Irrigation Company to continue to get water to support his cattle empire. He introduced agricultural crops such as cotton, rice, and alfalfa to the area and started an annual May Day celebration in 1877 to celebrate the completion of another canal. The celebration became an established custom in Los Banos that continues today.

According to the State Office of Historic Preservation, there are currently three historic resources in the Planning Area:

- The Canal Farm Inn (California Historical Landmark No. 548), 1460 E Pacheco Boulevard, established by Henry Miller in 1873 as his San Joaquin Valley ranch headquarters.
- Los Banos (California Historical Landmark No. 550), Los Banos Park, 803 E Pacheco Boulevard.
- Los Banos Creek (the site of the original town in the southwestern portion of the Planning Area).

Five resources in Los Banos are on or have been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, which includes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. These are:

- The Old Bank Building/Bank of Los Banos Building, 836–848 6th Street (currently listed);
- The Church of St. Joseph, 1109 K Street (currently listed);
- Bridge #39-200, The Delta Mendota Canal Bridge (eligible);
- Fegundo’s Barn, 20180 South Mercey Springs Road (eligible); and
- 65918 SR-152, 637 SR-152 (eligible).

CCIC also identifies additional historic buildings, structures, or objects within the Planning Area that have not been formally registered as historic sites. The location of registered historic sites is summarized in Table 6-4.

**TABLE 6–4: LISTED HISTORIC RESOURCES**

No	Name	Address
<b>National Register Site</b>		
1	Bank of Los Banos Building	836–848 6th Street
2	Church of St. Joseph	1109 K Street
<b>California Historic Landmark</b>		
3	Canal Farm Inn	1460 E. Pacheco Blvd
4	Los Banos	803 E. Pacheco Blvd. <sup>1</sup>
5	Los Banos Creek	Southwest portion of Planning Area

<sup>1</sup> Address depicts the location of historic plaque.

Source: Central California Information Center at California State University Stanislaus, 2022.

## Air Quality

Los Banos is within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB). The SJVAB is one of the most polluted air basins in California (see Table 6-5). Air quality is impacted by emissions and dust from vehicles, agricultural activities, and industry, including traffic along Interstate (I-) 5 and SR-99, which are then trapped by the basin’s unique topography and weather patterns.

Air quality in the basin is monitored and regulated by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), which operates a network of monitoring stations throughout the San Joaquin Valley to determine if emissions and air pollutant levels meet health and safety standards. Air quality is affected by three types of pollutants—criteria air pollutants, toxic air contaminants,



and odors and nuisances. Criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants (as described below) are under the purview of the SJVAPCD. The City has a more direct role in regulating odors and nuisances, and the release of particulate matter at construction sites.

### ***Regulatory Context***

Regulation of ambient air quality is achieved through the cooperation of various federal and state agencies that oversee regulations and implement air quality policies.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), pursuant to the federal Clean Air Act of 1967 (amended 1990) sets national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for several pollutants and oversees their implementation by State air quality agencies. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is the corresponding State agency. CARB is responsible for establishing emission standards for on-road motor vehicles sold in California and overseeing the activities of regional/county air districts. It also establishes air quality standards and is empowered under the California Clean Air Act to enforce compliance.

The SJVAPCD is the agency that administers air quality in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. Its jurisdiction covers eight counties, including Merced County, in which Los Banos is located. SJVAPCD has permit authority over stationary sources, acts as the primary reviewing agency for environmental documents, and develops regulations consistent with state and federal air quality agencies.

The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) also has a role in air quality planning by ensuring its transportation plans, programs, and projects conform to the most recent air quality requirements, and to coordinate effectively with other government agencies.

### **Odors and Nuisances**

Odors and nuisances may not have adverse health effects, but they do create discomfort and concern for residents. Controlling odor from livestock and poultry producers are major challenges, along with complaints of dust from construction sites. To help address this, policies in this Element call for buffers between incompatible uses and local controls at construction sites.

### ***Air Quality Conditions and Trends***

The SJVAPCD operates a network of air pollution monitoring stations in San Joaquin Valley to provide information on ambient concentrations of critical air pollutants and toxic air contaminants. The nearest air monitoring stations to Los Banos are at Merced City, roughly 30 miles northeast, at Coffee Avenue, and another at M Street. Since air quality is rarely localized and typically of a regional character, data recorded nearby can be taken to approximate air quality standards at Los Banos. Table 6-5 summarizes data collected from Merced County (for ozone, particulate matter, and nitrogen dioxide) and Stanislaus County (for carbon monoxide).

## ***Air Pollutants***

### **Criteria Air Pollutants**

Federal ambient air quality standards have been established to monitor the levels of six air pollutants. These are the “criteria” air pollutants. Criteria air pollutants include pollutants such as carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and lead (Pb).

Under the California Clean Air Act and amendments to the federal Clean Air Act, the U.S. EPA and CARB are required to classify Air Basins as either “Attainment” or “Non-Attainment” for each criterion of air pollutants, based on whether or not the national and state standards have been met. Table 6-5 shows minimum standards for criteria air pollutants, their effects on health, and potential sources. The Valley meets state and federal standards for all air pollutants except PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ground level-ozone, which remain in the “Non-Attainment” category.

Vehicles and industry are the main sources of particulates and ozone in the Valley, such as the transport of goods along I-5 and SR-99. Emissions are also generated through commercial operations and building energy use. Los Banos’ primary role in achieving and maintaining regional air quality standards is through land use and transportation policies and actions to reduce driving in the city, and through cooperation with state agencies such as SJVAPCD and CARB to implement emissions-control plans.

## ***Sensitive Receptors***

Sensitive receptors are segments of the population that are most susceptible to poor air quality, such as children, elderly people, and sick people, as well as sensitive land uses, such as hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, parks, and residential areas. To mitigate and avoid air quality problems, pollution sources should not be located near sensitive receptors, and vice versa. Appropriate buffers and separations should be established where possible.

Some people are more sensitive than others to the effects of air pollutants. Chronic asthma or bronchitis sufferers, young children, or the elderly, for example, may experience more discomfort compared to other residents. Aside from age and health problems, heightened sensitivity may also be caused by prolonged exposure to air pollutants and proximity to an emissions source. Therefore, hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, residential areas, and other sensitive receptors should not be located close to pollution sources.





**TABLE 6–5: AIR POLLUTANT SOURCES AND EFFECTS**

Pollutant	Major Pollutant Sources	Pollutant Health and Atmospheric Effects
<b>Ozone</b>	On-road motor vehicles, other mobile sources, solvent extraction, combustion, industrial, and commercial processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respiratory symptoms</li> <li>• Worsening of lung disease leading to premature death</li> <li>• Damage to lung tissue</li> <li>• Crop, forest, and ecosystem damage</li> <li>• Damage to a variety of materials, including rubber, plastics, fabrics, paint, and metals</li> </ul>
<b>Carbon Monoxide (CO)</b>	Internal combustion engines, primarily gasoline-powered motor vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chest pain in patients with heart disease</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Light-headedness</li> <li>• Reduced mental alertness</li> </ul>
<b>Nitrogen Oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>)</b>	Motor vehicles, petroleum refining operations, industrial sources, aircraft, ships, and railroads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lung irritation</li> <li>• Enhanced allergic responses</li> </ul>
<b>Sulfur Oxides (SO<sub>x</sub>)</b>	Fuel combustion, chemical plants, sulfur recovery plants, and metal processing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worsening of asthma: increased symptoms, increased medication usage, and emergency room visits</li> </ul>
<b>Respirable Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>)</b>	Dust- and fume-producing industrial and agricultural operations, combustion, atmospheric photochemical reactions, and natural activities (e.g., wind-raised dust and ocean sprays).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premature death &amp; hospitalization, primarily for worsening of respiratory disease</li> <li>• Reduced visibility and material soiling</li> </ul>
<b>Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)</b>	Fuel combustion in motor vehicles, equipment and industrial sources; residential and agricultural burning. Also formed from photochemical reactions of other pollutants, including NO <sub>x</sub> , sulfur oxides, and organics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premature death</li> <li>• Hospitalization for worsening of cardiovascular disease</li> <li>• Hospitalization for respiratory disease</li> <li>• Asthma-related emergency room visits</li> <li>• Increased symptoms, increased inhaler usage</li> </ul>
<b>Lead</b>	Present sources: lead smelters, battery manufacturing and recycling facilities. Past source: combustion of leaded gasoline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impaired mental functioning in children</li> <li>• Learning disabilities in children</li> <li>• Brain and kidney damage</li> </ul>

**TABLE 6–5: AIR POLLUTANT SOURCES AND EFFECTS**

Pollutant	Major Pollutant Sources	Pollutant Health and Atmospheric Effects
<b>Hydrogen Sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S)</b>	Oil and natural gas extraction and processing, geothermal fields, sewage treatment facilities, landfills, petrochemical plants, coke oven plants, and paper mills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nuisance odor (rotten egg smell).</li> <li>• At high concentrations: headache &amp; breathing difficulties.</li> </ul>
<b>Sulfate</b>	Combustion of petroleum-derived fuels (e.g., gasoline and diesel fuel) that contain sulfur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as PM<sub>2.5</sub>, particularly worsening asthma and other lung diseases.</li> <li>• Reduces visibility</li> </ul>
<b>Vinyl chloride</b>	Process of making polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic and vinyl products; primarily an occupational concern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central nervous system effects, such as dizziness, drowsiness &amp; headaches</li> <li>• Long-term exposure: liver damage &amp; liver cancer</li> </ul>
<b>Toxic Air Contaminants</b> (About 200 chemicals have been listed as toxic air contaminants)	Multiple; mobile sources such as cars and trucks; stationary sources such as factories, dry cleaning facilities, gas stations, hospital operations, and other businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cancer</li> <li>• Reproductive and developmental effects</li> <li>• Neurological effects</li> </ul>

ppm=parts per million; µg/m<sup>3</sup>=micrograms per cubic meter

Source: California Air Resource Board, Available at <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/common-air-pollutants>, March 2022.

## Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

Climate change is a critical issue that communities across the globe are facing now and will continue to face in the foreseeable and unforeseeable future. Climate change is a change in the average weather of the Earth that may be measured by wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature. Global average temperature and sea level are expected to rise in the coming century.

A key policy approach for addressing climate change focuses on reducing or eliminating greenhouse gases (GHGs). These gases play a critical role in determining the Earth’s surface temperature. Common GHGs include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxides, chlorofluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, ozone, and aerosols. Emissions of GHGs contributing to global climate change are attributable in large part to human activities associated with the industrial/manufacturing, utility, transportation, residential, and agricultural sectors.



The State of California has committed to achieving GHG emission reductions through legislative actions and executive orders. Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, codified into law a state target of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Senate Bill (SB) 32, adopted in 2016, codifies a GHG reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Executive Order S-03-05 sets a state goal of reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, although this goal does not yet have the force of law. CARB is responsible for overseeing and planning the state's GHG reduction efforts. CARB has prepared a Climate Change Scoping Plan, which lays out a framework for achieving the state's GHG reduction targets. The Scoping Plan identifies local jurisdictions as key partners in the State's efforts to reduce GHG emissions and provides guidance for local jurisdictions to establish GHG emission-reduction targets.

## Environmental Justice

Numerous environmental justice goals rest in the parks and open space system of Los Banos. Environmental justice (EJ) is defined in California law as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EJ-related policies for parks and open spaces are to prioritize benefits for disadvantaged communities in Los Banos.

Fair treatment within the parks and open space system means ensuring equitable access to and distribution of parks and open spaces for all residents and community members of Los Banos, particularly for disadvantaged communities. This means addressing gaps in access by populations currently and historically disenfranchised, such as communities of color and low-income populations. It also means providing spaces that can promote physical, mental, and social health by providing spaces for physical activity, social gatherings, and access to clean air and water. Parks and open spaces should address accessibility barriers to be usable by people of all ages and abilities.

Parks and open space resources are important for providing a healthy environment, especially for disadvantaged communities that have historically been subject to disproportionate impacts from pollution sources, such as high-traffic roads, industrial uses, and fossil-fuel energy. This includes seeking measures to improve air quality and water quality in impacted neighborhoods.

Disadvantaged communities are also most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As temperatures rise and intense weather events increase, the state of infrastructure in these communities will determine the severity of how they will be impacted. Examples of scenarios to plan for include flooding, wildfires, extreme heat, pandemics, and drought. Policies and programs promoting and implementing adequate cooling, emergency planning, and community resources will ensure an environmentally just parks and open space system.

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

A central principle of EJ is empowering communities to shape their own environment and determine their own outcomes. Policies promoting collaboration between the City and communities in the development, maintenance, and protection of parks, open spaces, and facilities are key to achieving this goal. Guiding communities to self-organize in seeking resources and undertaking activities to care for and improve their own environments will improve their resilience, especially against the impacts of climate change.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### *Parks and Recreation*

<b>GOAL</b> <b>P-1</b>	<b>Establish and maintain a high-quality public park system for Los Banos.</b>
---------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### POLICIES

Policy P-P1.1 Provide a range of park and recreation facilities to serve the needs of all residents and within close proximity to residents they are intended to serve to provide 5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.

Policy P-P1.2 Provide a unified and consistently marked trail system throughout the city, including bikeways, pathways, sidewalks, and other trails that link key destinations in the city, including parks and recreational facilities, community facilities, public schools, and downtown.

Policy P-P1.3 Preserve and maintain open space around the city for future generations.

Policy P-P1.4 Continue to provide public access to public open space to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy P-P1.5 Involve citizens, especially youths, in maintaining park areas through participation in park watches, citizen-based graffiti watch, cleanup, and repair.

Policy P-P1.6 Maintain and update a 10-year Park and Recreation Master Plan in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Commission. Community design standards for new park and recreation facilities should include:

- Standards for bicycle/pedestrian and handicapped access;





- Minimum safety standards in accordance with State guidelines; and
- Allowable native and drought-resistant plant species.

**Policy P-P1.7** Develop new parks with high-quality park facilities that are durable and require low maintenance, wherever possible. Retrofit existing parks, as appropriate, to reduce maintenance cost and water use, and to improve safety and aesthetics.

**Policy P-P1.8** Link parks together by a system of trails, bicycle paths, and/or open space.

**ACTIONS**

**Action P-A1.1** Acquire and develop parks and open spaces, consistent with the ability of the City to finance acquisition and operation, to reach a functional goal of at least 5 acres per 1,000 residents and a park within a quarter-mile access for each resident.

**Action P-A1.2** Establish the following minimum criteria as a guide to improving the park system:

- Neighborhood parks should have a minimum size of two to nine acres and a general service area of one-half mile radius; and
- Community parks should have a minimum size of 10 acres and a general service area of a two-mile radius.

**Action P-A1.3** Continue to develop existing trails and linkages and create new trails where feasible:

- **Rail Corridor Park.** Continue to develop the Rail Corridor Park and implement developments in the Rail Corridor Master Plan.
- **HG Fawcett Parkway.** Continue to improve and expand the HG Fawcett Parkway with active daytime uses consistent with Central California Irrigation District (CCID) use agreement, which may include exercise equipment, park furniture, and landscaping.
- **Los Banos Creek Trail.** Prepare and adopt a Los Banos Creek Parkway Plan prior to development of creekside properties.

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

## GOAL P-2

Establish long-term, sustainable approaches to park management and development within the Los Banos Planning Area.

### POLICIES

- Policy P-P2.1 Only approve pocket parks as part of a Planned Development if the long-term maintenance of such facilities is guaranteed by a legally established maintenance district.
- Policy P-P2.2 Actively pursue and use available public and private funding sources for land acquisition, facility construction, program development, and maintenance of parks and open spaces.
- Policy P-P2.3 Coordinate with the Los Banos Unified School District to promote joint development and use of school facilities after school hours.
- Policy P-P2.4 Pursue and maintain shared-use recreational facilities where possible, including on school grounds and utility easements, and look for additional partnership opportunities to expand resident access to shared facilities.

- Policy P-P2.5 Design park facilities to be as flexible as possible, so that they may adapt to changes in the population served and in the recreation program offered.
- Policy P-P2.6 Continue to cooperate with school districts in locating schools to allow for park development adjacent to campuses.
- Policy P-P2.7 Seek agreements and joint ventures with private entities to provide recreation facilities and activities.
- Policy P-P2.8 Pursue support from federal, state, and private sources to assist with acquisition, design, and construction of parks and recreation facilities.

### ACTIONS

- Action P-A2.1* Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to require developers to dedicate and improve any portion of a planned bike path or trail system that passes through their development project sites, including any needed linkages to the regional bicycle and trail system.



*Action P-A2.2* Include funding for trail acquisition and trail improvements in the Park Development Fee Program.

**Equitable Park Access**

<b>GOAL P-3</b>	<b>Ensure parks and open spaces are equitably distributed and accessible for all residents, especially disadvantaged communities.</b>
---------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**POLICIES**

*Policy P-P3.1* Prioritize creation of parks and open space in areas that are determined to lack adequate park space.

*Policy P-P3.2* Partner with transit agencies to ensure that parks and recreational facilities are accessible to low-income populations and communities of color.

*Policy P-P3.3* Provide equitable access to safe recreational activities and parks among all neighborhoods in Los Banos so that all residents are empowered to choose an active lifestyle that supports their health.

*Policy P-P3.4* Maintain joint-use agreements that provide access to recreation facilities serving disadvantaged communities.

*Policy P-P3.5* Increase access to diverse, high-quality parks, green space, recreational facilities, and natural environments for disadvantaged communities. Design and maintain these facilities to offer a safe and comfortable environment for residents of all ages and abilities.

*Policy P-P3.6* Rather than allowing in-lieu fees, require major new development projects in disadvantaged communities to improve existing park and recreation amenities within these communities and/or to add new amenities within the project, ideally open to the public. In-lieu fees may only be used when amenity improvements or new amenities are not feasible, as determined by the City.

*Policy P-P3.7* Increase recreation opportunities in disadvantaged communities by working with other agencies to convert public easements, such as utility corridors or unused rights-of-way, into parks and trails.

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

Policy P-P3.8 Promote recreational activity programs and opportunities to disadvantaged communities.

Policy P-P3.9 Partner with local school districts and non-profit organizations to improve access to bicycles, helmets, and related equipment for lower-income families.

## ACTIONS

*Action P-A3.1* Coordinate with park districts to prepare a parks, recreation, and open space needs assessment for each disadvantaged community. Based on the results of the assessment for each community, implement improvements that address barriers to outdoor physical activity, such as inadequate infrastructure and safety concerns. Prioritize park, recreation, and open space improvement activities to lower-income and higher-density areas, which may have a demonstrably greater need for these amenities.

*Action P-A3.2* Work with the City Parks and Recreation Division and the Los Banos Unified School District to identify indoor recreational and athletic facilities to serve as emergency housing and cooling centers in disadvantaged communities for natural hazards or extreme heat events. In addition, work with these districts to prepare a list of priority improvements at these facilities to implement in preparation for emergency events.

**GOAL**  
**P-4** Empower communities to participate in developing and maintaining parks, open spaces, facilities, and programming.

## POLICIES

Policy P-P4.1 Partner with and support local community groups and volunteer organizations in efforts to improve or maintain local parks, trails, and other public spaces, especially in disadvantaged communities.





Policy P-P4.2 Ensure residents of disadvantaged communities are meaningfully engaged for input as early as possible when new developments and projects are proposed in their communities.

Policy P-P4.3 Assist disadvantaged communities in establishing funding and financing mechanisms – both community-generated mechanisms like building improvement districts and City-initiated mechanisms like landscape and lighting improvement districts – to provide community-desired public facilities and services.

Policy P-P4.4 Promote a sense of community responsibility for maintaining and improving the parks and recreation system, and offer ways for individuals, groups, and businesses to invest time and resources in that effort.

Policy P-P4.5 Explore options for the City to provide seed grants, micro loans, or similar funding to community-based organizations or public-private partners to support improvements in disadvantaged communities, such as murals and planting strips.

Policy P-P4.6 Seek resident involvement and feedback to create recreation programming that is relevant to a broad spectrum of community members.

**Open Space Resources**

<b>GOAL</b> <b>P-5</b>	<b>Protect and restore open space resources of Los Banos.</b>
---------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

**POLICIES**

Policy P-P5.1 Protect and enhance the natural habitat features and open space corridors within and around the Planning Area.

Policy P-P5.2 Require degraded open space areas be restored to an environmentally sustainable condition as part of development approval where these lands are proposed as permanent open space in new development.

Policy P-P5.3 Require the preservation of mature trees and encourage the planting of drought-resistant street and shade trees in all new developments.

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

Policy P-P5.4 Work with property owners, law enforcement officials, and the public in preserving or restoring open space to its natural state. These efforts may include, but are not limited to:

- Soliciting volunteers to remove invasive vegetation;
- Removing abandoned items and trash; and
- Ensuring no illegal encampments occur on open space areas.

Policy P-P5.5 Support efforts to increase the regional county open space system through joint efforts with Grassland Water District, Central California Irrigation District, Merced County, and trustee agencies.

Policy P-P5.6 Require anti-vandalism designs (appropriate fencing or other landscape features) to ensure that new development has conditions that minimize increased vandalism of adjacent agricultural activities outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Policy P-P5.7 Reduce light pollution and other adverse effects associated with night lighting from streets and urban uses.

## ACTIONS

- Action P-A5.1* Establish priorities for open space preservation and acquisition based on an evaluation of:
- Significant natural areas that are historically, ecologically, or scientifically unique or are outstanding, important, or threatened;
  - Wildlife habitats and fragile ecosystems in need of protection;
  - Watersheds or significant water recharge areas;
  - Open space for safety and public health;
  - Lands suitable for recreation, such as biking, photography, or nature study;
  - Preserving or restoring natural features and ecosystem processes that can increase resiliency to climate change; and
  - Land suitable for agricultural production.



- Action P-A5.2* Establish and maintain a protection zone around wetlands, riparian corridors, and identified habitat areas where development shall not occur, except as part of a parkway enhancement program (e.g., trails and bikeways).
- Action P-A5.3* Work with the Grassland Water District to create a greenbelt/open space buffer around the perimeter of the city that provides a clear sense of identity and protects the Grassland Ecological Area.
- Action P-A5.4* Work with the Grassland Water District to establish a “no net loss” policy for wetlands and vernal pools within and adjacent to the Planning Area.

**Biological Resources**

<b>GOAL</b> <b>P-6</b>	<b>Protect and restore biological resources of Los Banos.</b>
---------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

**POLICIES**

- Policy P-P6.1 Protect species that are federally or state listed as rare, threatened, endangered, or sensitive.
- Policy P-P6.2 Require assessments of biological resources prior to approval of any development within 300 feet of any creeks, wetlands, sensitive habitat areas, or areas of potential special-status species. Protect sensitive habitat areas and special-status species in the following order: (1) avoidance, (2) on-site mitigation, and (3) off-site mitigation.
- Policy P-P6.3 Review development proposals in accordance with applicable federal and state laws protecting special-status species and jurisdictional wetlands and use the California Natural Diversity Database and field reconnaissance, where necessary, to confirm habitat value, to assist in identifying potential conflicts with sensitive habitats or special-

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

status species and establishing appropriate mitigation and monitoring requirements.

Policy P-P6.4 Provide wildlife corridors to allow movement of animals and minimize wildlife-urban conflicts.

Policy P-P6.5 Require project applicants to avoid nests of native birds in active use, in compliance with state and federal regulations. For new development sites where nesting birds may be present, initiate vegetation clearing and construction outside the bird nesting season (March 1 through August 31) or conduct preconstruction surveys by a qualified biologist in advance of any disturbance. If active nests are encountered, establish appropriate buffer zones based on recommendations by the qualified biologist and maintain the buffer zones until any young birds have successfully left the nest.

## ACTION

*Action P-A6.1* Develop buffer zones around the Los Banos Creek corridor and the grassland wetland areas to the east of the city to enhance

groundwater recharge and minimize impacts to habitat and species.

## Agricultural Resources

### GOAL P-7

Protect and preserve agricultural resources around Los Banos.

### POLICIES

- Policy P-P7.1 Promote preservation of agriculture within the Planning Area.
- Policy P-P7.2 Work with the County and with the Grassland Water District to preserve agricultural uses outside the Urban Growth Boundary.
- Policy P-P7.3 Support agricultural conservation easement programs managed by other public, private, and non-profit organizations.
- Policy P-P7.4 Require developers of residential developments adjoining agricultural land to provide, fund, and maintain a physical buffer to ensure that agricultural practices will not be adversely affected.



**Policy P-P7.5** Require property developers adjacent to sites where agricultural uses are being conducted to inform subsequent buyers of potential continued agricultural production and the lawful use of agricultural chemicals, including pesticides and fertilizers.

**Policy P-P7.6** Require applicants of annexation proposals that would result in the conversion of 50 or more acres of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland to do the following:

- Prepare an inventory of the vacant land within the city limit zoned for similar uses as the proposed annexation, and an analysis of the probable build-out time for that quantity of vacant land given past development rates. When the inventory includes vacant land to support more than 12 years of development (10-year inventory plus an additional two years to account for annexation processes), the applicant shall demonstrate to the City's satisfaction why the existing vacant land within the city limits is not suitable for the proposed development.

- Prepare a phasing timeline that prioritizes development of lands with lesser farmland value, lands immediately adjacent to existing development within the city, lands with prior disturbance of farmland, lands that do not encroach beyond major barriers into areas of farmland not already partially developed, and/or lands that do not require cancellation or non-renewal of a Williamson Act contract.
- Use major land features as boundaries, including roads, canals, creeks, or highway plan lines, so that annexation boundaries are physically separated from remaining agricultural land beyond the annexation area, when appropriate.

### ACTION

*Action P-A7.1* Explore feasible and implementable policies and mitigation measures to address impacts to agricultural land, including:

- Participating in a County-established agricultural mitigation program that preserves one acre of farmland for every acre converted.



# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

- Establishing or participating in a program to restore or improve land in Merced County to a level that meets the criteria of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, in order to create new farmland in addition to preserving existing farmland.
- Establishing a local right-to-farm ordinance.

*Action P-A7.2* Establish and maintain a Grassland Resources Overlay Zone (GROZ) as shown in Figure 6-4 for the inter-canal area between the San Luis Canal and the Santa Fe Canal north of the city limit where lands within the GROZ (allowing for the bypass) shall remain in agricultural and open space uses.

## GOAL P-8

Support community agriculture and equitable food production.

## POLICIES

Policy P-P8.1 Reduce permitting barriers to, protect, and expand urban agriculture.

Policy P-P8.2 Allow edible landscaping and community gardens for suitable public and private land, as well as new large-scale residential and mixed-use development projects.

Policy P-P8.3 Recognize the importance and needs of temporary agricultural workers.

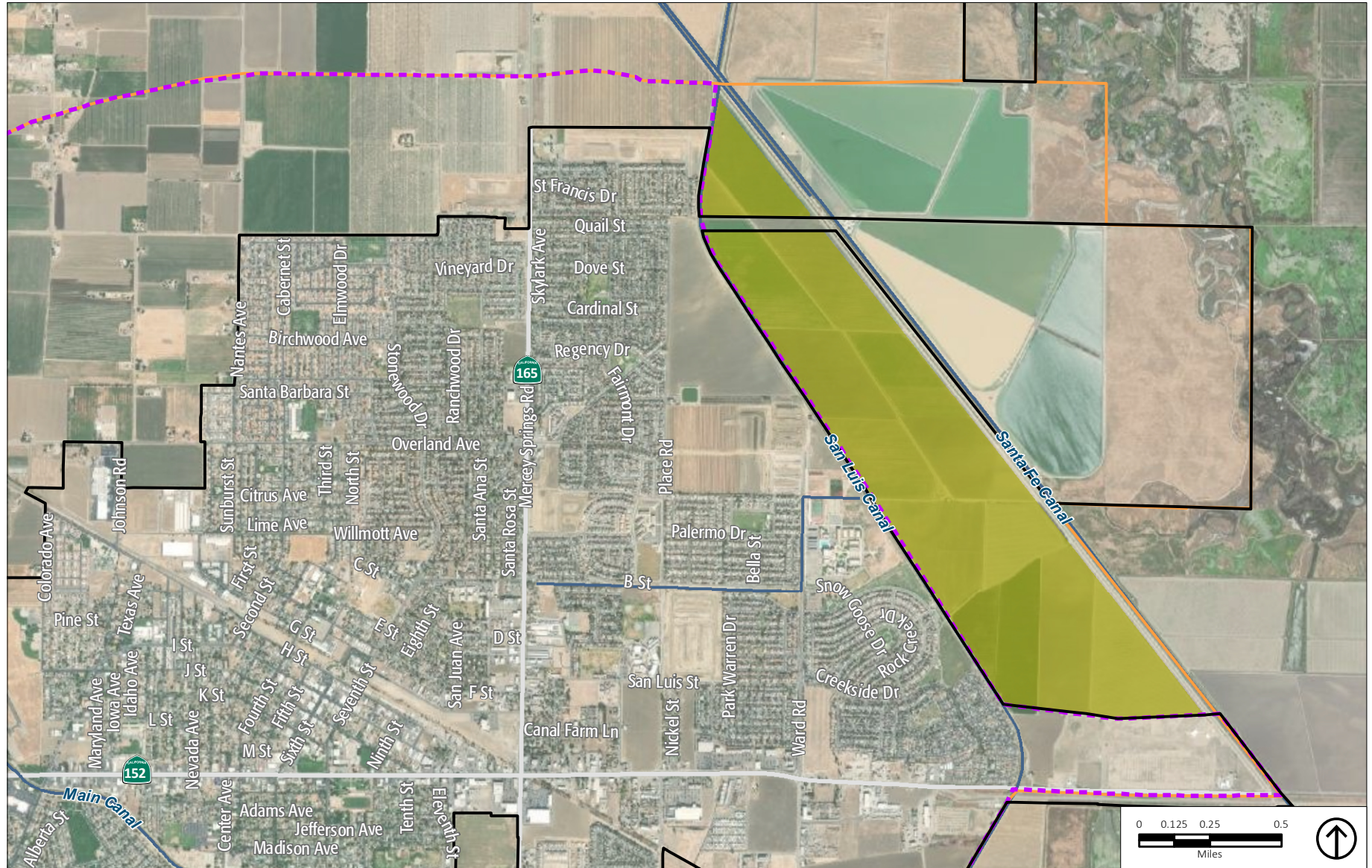
Policy P-P8.4 Support programs and strategies to improve conditions for temporary agricultural workers, especially cooperative solutions that create better living conditions for farmworkers, such as improved farmworker housing.

## ACTIONS

*Action P-A8.1* Identify vacant lots and underutilized public land that can be turned into neighborhood-run community gardens.

*Action P-A8.2* Explore opportunities for community-supported agriculture within the community.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION



Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2020.

- City Limit
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Grassland Resources Overlay Zone

Figure 6-4  
Grassland Resources Overlay Zone

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

## Water Resources

### GOAL P-9

Protect and restore water quality in and around Los Banos.

### POLICIES

- Policy P-P9.1 Protect the quality of stormwater that discharges into areas in and around Los Banos.
- Policy P-P9.2 Ensure groundwater quality is maintained at a satisfactory level for domestic consumption.
- Policy P-P9.3 Require the use of enhanced stormwater control facilities that provide additional filtration of stormwater to remove pollutants prior to discharge to pastureland or the Grassland Water District and other water districts.
- Policy P-P9.4 Work with the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (SJREC) Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) group to offset increases in water demand based on projected population growth by identifying, analyzing, and implementing projects jointly with the SJREC to maximize the regional benefits. The

City will develop projects to offset overdraft, including (1) stormwater capture, (2) demand reduction through reduced watering, (3) surface water transfer, (4) purchasing groundwater credits, and (5) participation in recharge projects.

### ACTIONS

- Action P-A9.1* Monitor groundwater quality and quantity throughout the Planning Area.
- Action P-A9.2* Work with Central California Irrigation District to investigate a possible water recharge program.
- Action P-A9.3* Seek funding from the Department of Water Resources' Sustainable Groundwater Planning Grant Program (SGWP) to fund projects that promote the sustainable use of groundwater.
- Action P-A9.4* Explore the feasibility of surface water transfers from Central California Irrigation District and Grassland Water District to alleviate groundwater overdraft and groundwater quality issues.





**Cultural Resources**

<b>GOAL P-10</b>	<b>Protect and restore the cultural and historic resources of Los Banos.</b>
----------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**POLICIES**

- Policy P-P10.1    Preserve the archaeological and historic resources that are found within the Los Banos Planning Area.
  
- Policy P-P10.2    Preserve any tribal cultural resources that are found within the Los Banos Planning Area.
  
- Policy P-P10.3    Require consultation with Native American tribes during General Plan amendments or updates, Specific Plans, or Specific Plan amendments, and any project that may impact a tribal cultural resource.
  
- Policy P-P10.4    After consultation with local Native American tribes affected by the General Plan, Specific Plan, or any project that may affect that tribe, determine which areas may be of cultural significance and determine how the areas can be preserved. Continue consultation with tribes throughout implementation of the plan.

Policy P-P10.5    Require that new development analyze and avoid any potential impacts to archaeological, paleontological, and designated historic resources by:

- Requiring a record search at the Central California Information Center located at California State University Stanislaus and other appropriate historical repositories for development proposed in areas that are considered archaeologically sensitive;
  
- Studying the potential effects of development and construction (as required by the California Environmental Quality Act);
  
- Requiring pre-construction field surveys (where appropriate) and monitoring during any ground disturbance for all development in areas of historical and archaeological sensitivity; and
  
- Implementing appropriate measures or project alternatives to avoid significant impacts to historical resources. Where such impacts are unavoidable, document the structure(s) in accordance with the National Park Service’s Historic American

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION



Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER). Such effects would still be considered significant.

Policy P-P10.6 Promote the listing of individual properties and historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places and in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Policy P-P10.7 Require applicants of major development projects to consult with Native American representatives regarding cultural resources to identify locations of importance to Native Americans, including archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties.

Policy P-P10.8 Prohibit the damage or destruction of paleontological resources, including prehistorically significant fossils, ruins, monuments, or objects of antiquity, that could potentially be caused by future development.

## ACTIONS

*Action P-A10.1* Explore the feasibility of creating a heritage trail linking significant historical landmarks in Los Banos.

*Action P-A10.2* Retain a qualified architectural historian to undertake a survey to identify historic properties and historic districts eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and in the California Register of Historical Resources.

*Action P-A10.3* Update the City’s building regulations to implement the State Historic Building Code for alterations to designated historic properties.

## Air Quality

<b>GOAL</b> <b>P-11</b>	<b>Maintain and improve air quality within Los Banos.</b>
----------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------

## POLICIES

Policy P-P11.1 Improve air quality to promote public health, safety, and Los Banos’ environmental quality.

Policy P-P11.2 Make air quality a priority in land use planning by implementing emissions-reduction efforts targeting mobile sources, stationary sources, and construction-related sources.





Policy P-P11.3 Require that new multifamily residential buildings and other sensitive land uses in areas with high levels of localized air pollution be designed to achieve good indoor air quality through landscaping, ventilation systems, or other measures.

Policy P-P11.4 Support federal and state efforts to reduce greenhouse gases and emissions through local action that will reduce motor vehicle use, support alternative forms of transportation, require energy conservation in new construction, and energy management in public buildings.

Policy P-P11.5 Assume leadership in efforts to reduce toxic air pollutants and ozone-depleting compounds.

Policy P-P11.6 Require developers to implement best management practices to reduce air pollutant emissions due to construction work and operation of equipment.

- During clearing, grading, earth-moving or excavation operations, fugitive dust emissions shall be controlled by regular watering, paving of construction roads, or other dust-preventive measures.

- All materials excavated or graded shall be either sufficiently watered or covered by canvas or plastic sheeting to prevent excessive amounts of dust.
- All materials transported off-site shall be either sufficiently watered or covered by canvas or plastic sheeting to prevent excessive amounts of dust.
- All motorized vehicles shall have their tires watered before exiting a construction site.
- The area disturbed by demolition, clearing, grading, earth-moving, or excavation shall be minimized at all times.
- All construction-related equipment shall be maintained in good working order to reduce exhaust from this equipment.

Policy P-P11.7 Prohibit wood-burning stoves and fireplaces in new development.

Policy P-P11.8 Use the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Guidelines for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts for determining and mitigating project air quality impacts and related thresholds of significance for use in environmental documents.

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

## ACTIONS

- Action P-A11.1* Develop and implement a plan to provide clean air refuges during times when outdoor air quality is unhealthy.
- Action P-A11.2* Purchase hybrid gasoline-electric or bio-diesel fuel vehicles for the City fleet and provide incentives to City employees who carpool or use hybrid vehicles.

### Climate Change

**GOAL P-12** Promote resilient design and energy efficiency in the built environment.

## POLICIES

- Policy P-P12.1 Maximize tree planting, landscaping, green roofs, and other vegetation measures to mitigate heat gain and heat island effects, improve resilience, and create new spaces for biodiversity.
- Policy P-P12.2 Where feasible, require use of materials that minimize heat island effect, such as cool pavements and cool roofs. Where feasible, minimize impervious and paved surfaces.
- Policy P-P12.3 Encourage the use of low-emission building, such as HVAC equipment, and operation equipment for all new residential and commercial development.
- Policy P-P12.4 Provide incentives and/or partner with the Community Choice Aggregation agency for improving energy efficiency in existing buildings.
- Policy P-P12.5 Educate City employees and department managers about sustainability with a focus on specific operational changes that can be made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as fuel-efficient driving and reducing energy use at work.



**ACTION**

*Action P-A12.1* Prepare a Climate Action Plan (CAP) to achieve the GHG reduction targets of Senate Bill 32 for the year 2030. Updated the CAP every five years to ensure the City is monitoring the plan’s progress toward achieving the City’s greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target and to require amendment if the plan is not achieving specified level.

***Air Quality and Community Health***

**GOAL  
P-13**

**Ensure equitable and healthy air quality among all communities in the city so that all residents, including those with high sensitivity to unhealthy air, can live in their community without facing disproportionately high risks of respiratory disease and other health problems.**

**POLICIES**

Policy P-P13.1 Require a cumulative health risk assessment, including consideration of truck traffic impacts, when a project potentially affects sensitive receptors in disadvantaged communities, and

require appropriate mitigation based on the findings of the assessment.

Policy P-P13.2 When evaluating health risk impacts of projects in disadvantaged communities, use a cancer risk of 1.0 per million as the threshold for a significant impact.

Policy P-P13.3 Require new development to site-sensitive receptors, such as homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, and long-term healthcare facilities as far away as possible from significant pollution sources.

Policy P-P13.4 When evaluating air quality impacts of projects in disadvantaged communities, use thresholds of significance that match or are more stringent than the air quality thresholds of significance identified in the current San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Air Quality Guidelines.

Policy P-P13.5 Prioritize new street tree plantings and increase the tree canopy in disadvantaged communities, in particular areas with a high heat index.

# 6 PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION

Policy P-P13.6 Preserve, restore, and enhance natural landscapes in and near disadvantaged communities for their role in improving air quality and community health and increasing resilience against climate change.

Policy P-P13.7 Require warehouse and distribution facilities to provide adequate on-site truck parking to prevent idling and require refrigerated warehouses to provide generators for refrigerated trucks.

## ACTION

*Action P-A13.1* Complete an urban forest master plan that includes quantified goals and tracking methods, prioritizing disadvantaged communities.



This page intentionally left blank.



*The purpose of the Safety and Noise Element is to identify the natural and human-made hazards that exist within the City of Los Banos and to establish guiding policies and implementing actions to mitigate their potential impacts through both preventative and responsive measures. This Element addresses seismicity, soil hazards, and erosion; flood hazards; wildfire hazards; hazardous materials; health and safety services; local hazard mitigation planning; climate change; and noise. It also includes policies on natural hazards mitigation planning, which respond to the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's implementing regulations.*

## Contents

- 1 Seismicity, Soil Hazards, and Erosion
- 2 Flooding
- 3 Wildfire Hazards
- 4 Hazardous Materials Sites
- 5 Health and Safety Services
- 6 Local Hazard Mitigation Planning
- 7 Climate Change and Resilience
- 8 Noise
- 9 Goals, Policies, and Actions

## Seismicity, Soil Hazards, and Erosion

### ***Geology***

The City of Los Banos is in the San Joaquin Valley, which is in the southern half of the Great Valley geomorphic province, a 50-mile-wide alluvial plain that runs 400 miles north and south making up California's Central Valley. Sediments from surrounding mountain ranges have been deposited in the trough of the Great Valley since the Jurassic period, 160 million years ago. As part of the Great Valley, the Los Banos Planning Area is mainly flat, underlain with sediments from alluvial deposits as well as non-marine sedimentary rocks. The nearest mountain range is the Diablo Range of the Coast Ranges, which is about 20 miles to the west.



### ***Seismicity***

The California Geological Survey (CGS) has undertaken a complete probabilistic seismic hazard analysis for the City. According to the CGS, no active earthquake faults are known to exist within the Planning Area. The nearest known fault is the Tesla Ortigalita fault zone and the O’Neill fault zone, both located about eight miles west of Los Banos. Although they do not pass through the city, these faults can produce ground motion in Los Banos. The Tesla Ortigalita fault is considered capable of generating a six- to seven-Richter Magnitude earthquake with a recurrence interval of 2,000 to 5,000 years. Figure 7-1 shows regional faults and linear traces surrounding the Planning Area.

Earthquakes can cause geologic failures ranging from ground shaking, surface rupture along the fault zone, to related secondary ground failures. Secondary ground failures include liquefaction, landslides, ground lurching and seiches, and lateral spreading. Secondary ground failures could cause major structural damage to existing buildings, including tilting or settlement of foundations, twisting and breaking of structural building components, debris shedding, and potentially even collapse of buildings. In the case of seiches, damage to levees and dams could be significant.

Los Banos’ distance to fault zones in the region, including the Ortigalita, Calaveras, San Andreas, and Hayward Faults, places it within “Maximum Expectable Earthquake Intensity Zone III,” where “High Severity, Most Probable Damage” could result should an earthquake occur in the region.

The International Building Code, International Existing Building Code, and International Residential Code provide earthquake-resistant provisions for building design and construction.

### ***Soil Hazards***

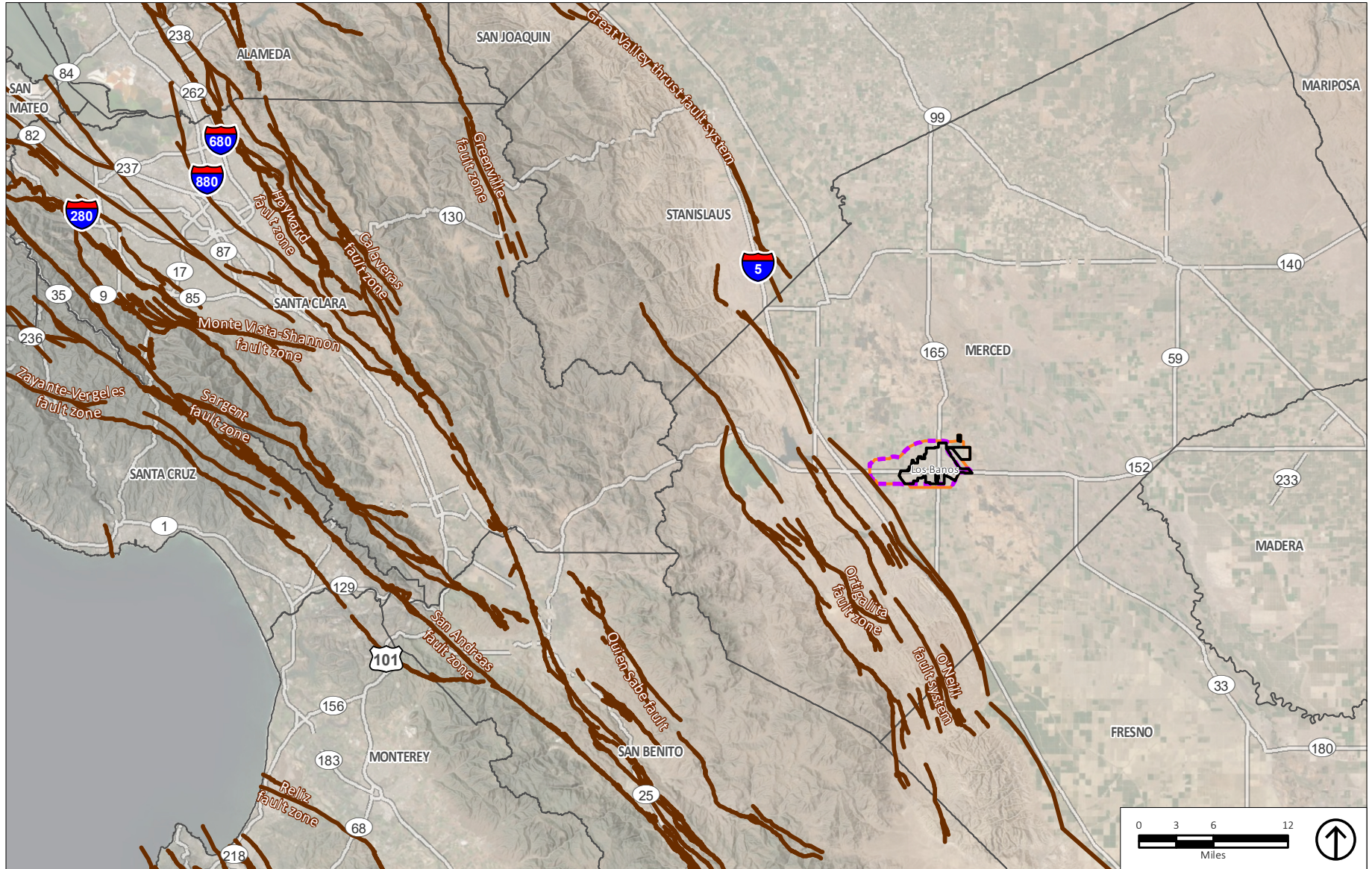
The Central Valley, which includes the San Joaquin Valley, is an area filled with fertile sediments as a result of marine deposits from millions of years ago. Soils in and around Los Banos are formed in mixed alluvium, which makes the area suitable for cultivation. The same soil characteristic, however, also subjects the Planning Area to both shrink-swell and subsidence hazards.

### ***Shrink-Swell***

The most common soil types found within the Planning Area are Woo, Stanislaus, Dosamigos, Capay, Henmel, and Pedcat associations. All of these soil types, except Woo, are “expansive”—a quality characterized by slow permeability and the potential to shrink or swell significantly with changes in moisture content. Expansive soils are a potential geologic hazard as structures located on them may be damaged should the soil suddenly shrink or swell. Additionally, structural damage may occur over a long period of time from inadequate foundation engineering or the placement of structures directly on expansive soils.



SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



Source: Merced County, 2018; ESRI, 2019; United States Geological Survey, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- Earthquake Faults
- City Limit
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- County Boundaries
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

Figure 7-1  
Regional Faults

### ***Subsidence***

Subsidence in Los Banos is recognized as a geologic hazard. Subsidence is the gradual sinking of the ground as a result of loss of subsurface materials, with little or no horizontal motion. It is often accompanied by large-scale ground cracking, and in some cases, the cracking has movement across it, making it into incipient or actual faulting. Subsidence may occur over a small or large area depending on the amount of subsurface movement. Shifts in the water table or loss of groundwater are major causes. Subsidence can also be caused by excavation work, hydrocompaction, or oxidation of organic soils.

On rare occasions, subsidence may occur due to earthquake-induced ground movement.

### ***Erosion***

Table 7-1 summarizes erosion susceptibility in the Planning Area. Figure 7-2 illustrates erosion susceptibility, which shows that much of the Planning Area contains soil with slight erosion hazards, with moderate risk of erosion at the west-southwest edge of the Planning Area. The risk of erosion is greatly increased during grading and construction activities when soils are loosened and bare of vegetation. Erosion-control measures prevent downstream sedimentation and surface water degradation.

**TABLE 7-1: EROSION SUSCEPTIBILITY**

Category	Total Acres	Percentage of Total Planning Area
Slight	12,259	54.2
Moderate	61	0.2
Severe	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,320</b>	<b>54.4</b>

Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, 2022.

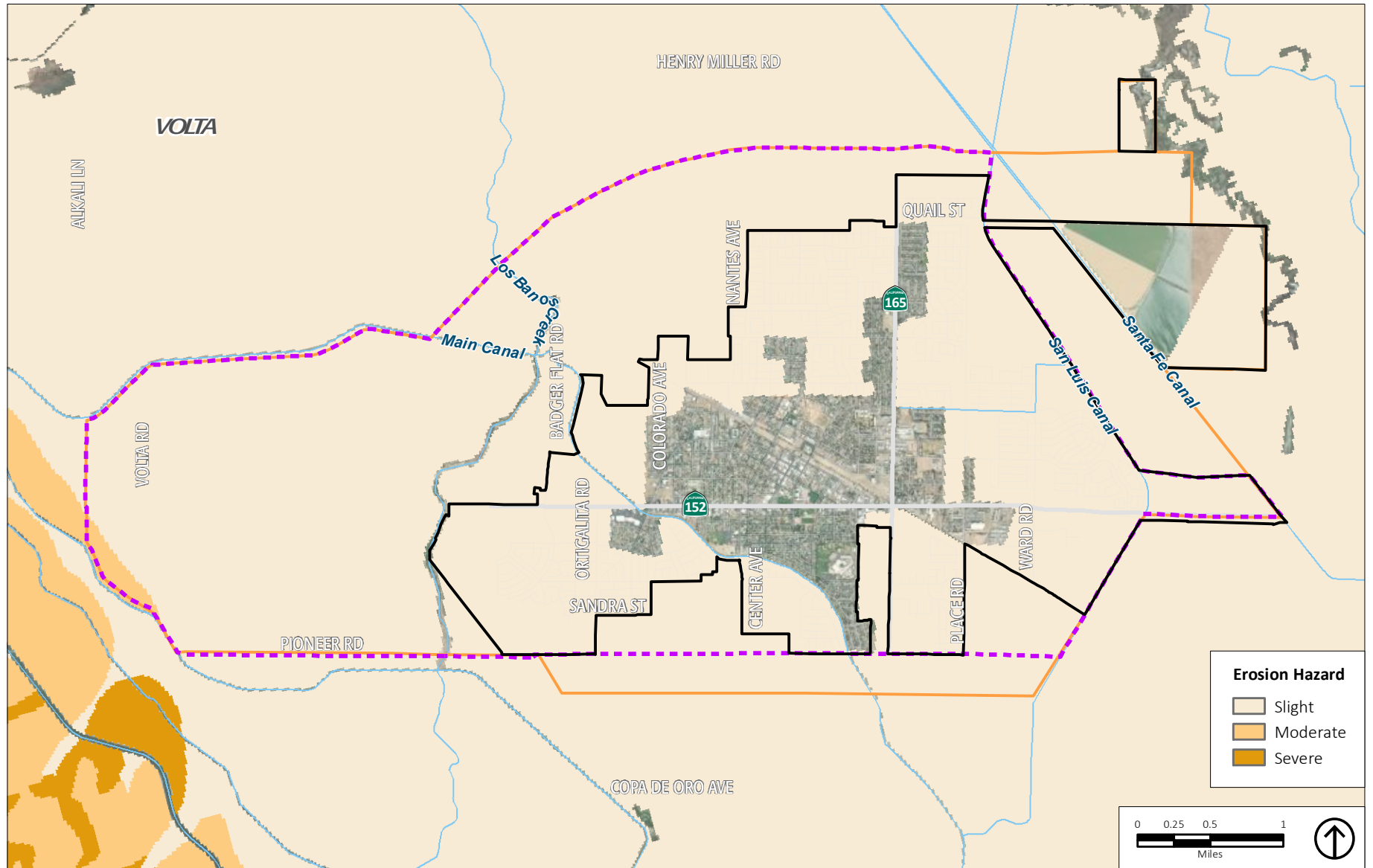
## **Flooding**

### ***Dam Inundation***

Flooding due to dam inundation can be the result of natural or human-made factors, such as earthquakes, erosion, or structural design flaws. Snow melt or landslides also may trigger a dam failure by over-topping the dam. A dam failure can cause catastrophic loss of life, damage to property, and displacement of residents. Next to earthquakes, it is the most dangerous natural hazard facing the city.



SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



Source: National Resource Conservation Service, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 7-2  
Erosion Hazards





Two dams close to Los Banos have the potential of inundating portions or the whole of the Planning Area. Both dams are owned and regularly inspected by the Bureau of Reclamation. Flood zone mapping by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) indicates that the entire Planning Area is within the Los Banos Creek Detention Reservoir dam inundation area. Northern portions of the Planning Area are also within the San Luis Reservoir Dam inundation area.<sup>1</sup> Figure 7-3 depicts the probable extent of inundation of a dam failure.

Los Banos Detention Reservoir is an earthfill detention dam southwest of the Planning Area on Los Banos Creek that was constructed in 1965 to protect areas surrounding Los Banos from regular flooding. The dam is 167 feet high and provides recreation facilities for picnicking, camping, swimming, fishing, and boating.

The San Luis Dam was constructed in 1967 to control flood waters in the San Luis Canal. The dam is 382 feet high and contains 77,656,000 cubic yards of material. The dam's crest is 30 feet thick. The dam structure is constructed to withstand an earthquake of magnitude 8.3.

### ***Storm Drainage***

In Los Banos, stormwater runoff is discharged through a combination of natural and human-made drainage structures, including creeks, waterways, and irrigation channels. Some of these are described in detail herein.

Figure 7-4 shows the flood zone mapping covering the Los Banos Planning Area by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The relatively flat topography, low incidence of rain, and availability of various drainage management facilities make sudden floods by rain unlikely.

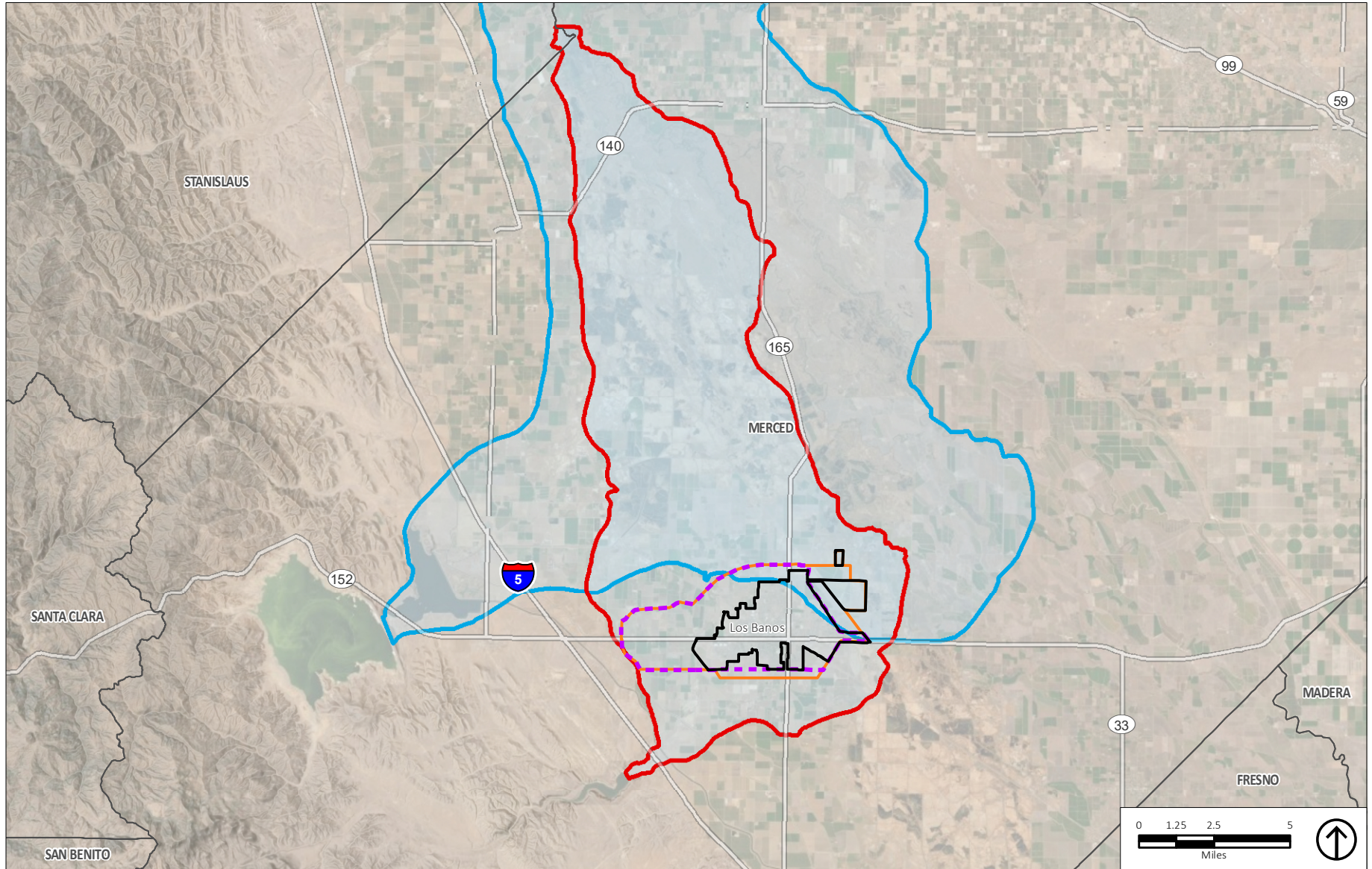
### **Los Banos Creek**

Los Banos Creek is the predominant natural drainage feature in the region. It runs in a north to south direction and is at the western part of the city. The Los Banos Creek Detention Reservoir (LBCDR) was constructed to manage risk of the creek flooding with intermittent flood-flow release upstream. The Grassland Water District (GWD) regulates creek flow downstream and diverts part of the creek for wetlands water supply purposes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Merced Irrigation District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, February 1987.

SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



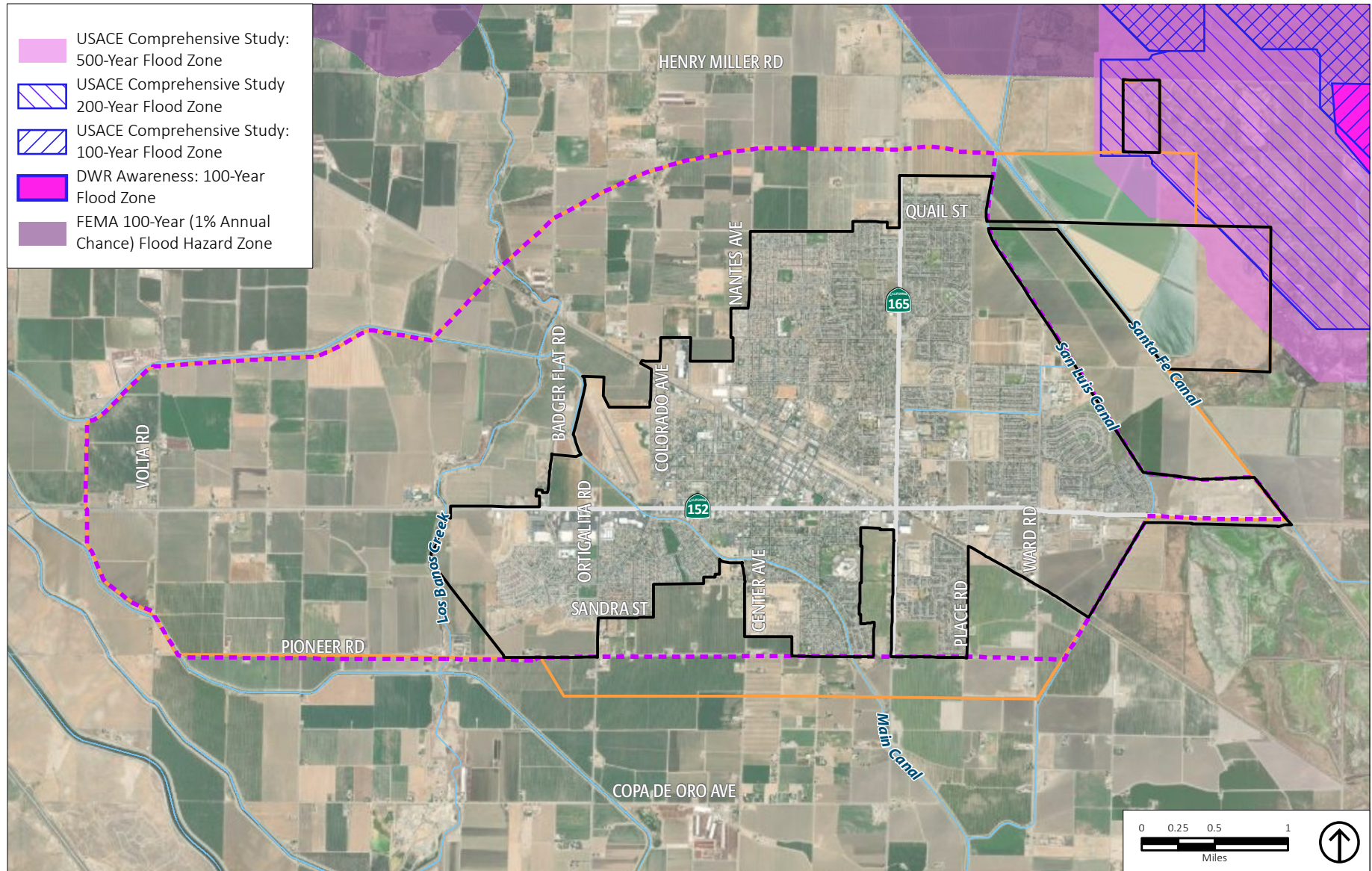
Source: Merced County, 2018; ESRI, 2019; Cal OES, 2016; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- County Boundaries
- ▭ City Limit
- ▨ Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- ▭ Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- ▭ San Luis Reservoir
- ▭ Los Banos Creek Detention Reservoir

Figure 7-3  
Dam Inundation Zones



SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



Source: USACE, 2022; FEMA, 2021; Merced County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 7-4  
Flooding Hazards

## Mud Slough

Mud Slough is a tributary of the original Los Banos Creek channel and runs in a northwesterly direction east of the city. Peak level flows in the Mud Slough drainage area are controlled by a number of projects by the GWD. The flow generated in the slough south of State Route (SR-) 152 is directed into the Santa Fe Canal and is used as part of GWD's water supply.

## Irrigation Canals

The Central California Irrigation District's (CCID's) Main Canal is a major human-made water feature and runs approximately in a southwesterly direction in the Planning Area. This conveyance facility is the main artery for water supply for CCID and collects stormwater runoff from the city. GWD's San Luis Canal and Santa Fe Canal are in the eastern portion of the Planning Area and convey water for irrigation and wetlands. Stormwater runoff from the city is also conveyed to these canals.

Also see Chapter 6, Parks, Open Space, and Conservation, on policies related to stormwater filtration and groundwater recharge, and Chapter 8, Public Facilities and Services, on policies related to water and wastewater utilities and water conservation.

## Wildfire Hazards

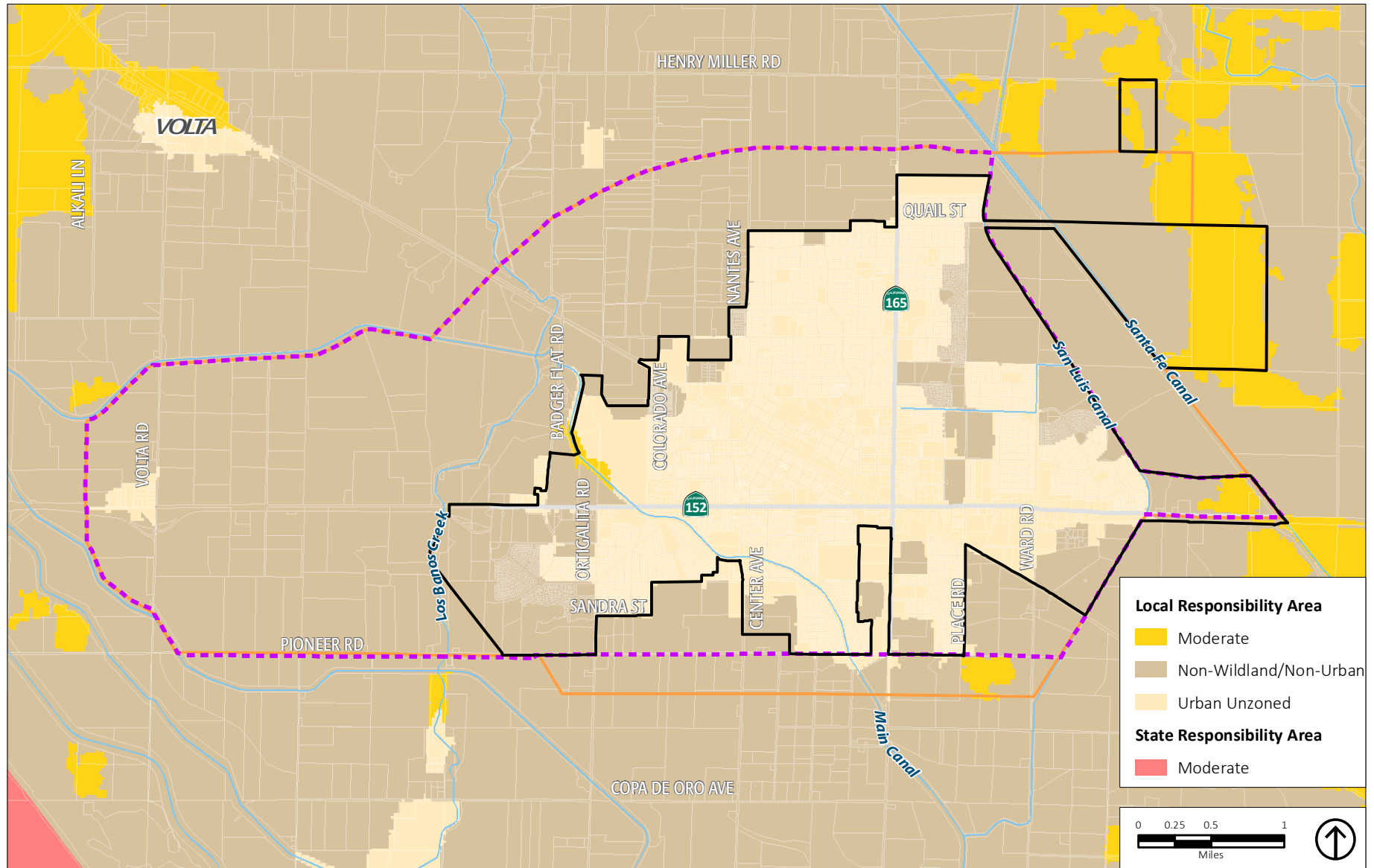
Wildfire hazard is largely dependent on the extent and type of vegetation, known as surface fuels, that exists within a region. They differ from urban fires in that wildland fires are typically harder to control, highly unpredictable, and spread more rapidly.

Figure 7-5 shows fire hazard severity zones (FHSZ) in the Planning Area, including State Responsibility Areas (SRA) and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). Los Banos and adjacent areas of Merced County are within the LRA. There are no areas in the Very High FHSZ in the LRA in or around Los Banos. The riparian forest corridor along Los Banos Creek represents the largest single risk due to the amount of tree cover and undergrowth, and is considered a Moderate FHSZ. The Los Banos Creek corridor is being managed with the implementation of Los Banos Creek flood-control measures. Wildfire hazards are most likely to occur at the edges of the city where residential homes abut grassland or open space. An increase in these urban-rural interface areas will also increase wildfire risks. Within the city, fuel loading is light and fire risk comes primarily from urban fires, not wildfires.

## Hazardous Materials Sites

Hazardous materials are defined as any material that is flammable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic. Hazardous materials are present in businesses and factories and are also found in homes in the form of solvents, cleaning fluids, or other substances. The main concern with hazardous materials lies in their improper storage, disposal, and accidental release.

SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



Source: Merced County, 2018; CALFIRE, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 7-5  
Fire Hazard Severity Zones



Figure 7-6 identifies active sites where there is known or suspected release of hazardous materials from activities. Table 7-2 provides a complete listing of these sites. Contamination can be caused by leaking underground storage tanks along with activities associated with certain uses, such as gas stations, convenience stores, car washes, etc., local industrial, and agricultural uses. Contaminated sites threaten the city's groundwater and pose a threat to residents. Disturbance of previously contaminated areas through grading or excavation operations could expose the public to health hazards from physical contact with contaminated materials.

Various California and federal agencies govern the proper storage, handling, and transport of hazardous materials. The Merced County Division of Environmental Health is the appointed regional authority for hazardous waste in Los Banos. It oversees the cleanup of contaminated sites originating from leaking underground storage tank systems as well as the disposal of hazardous wastes. Merced County runs a household waste disposal and oil collection center along SR-59 and provides free collection service every month to city residents. The role of the City is primarily in making land use decisions regarding siting of hazardous facilities, as well as supporting federal, state, and regional agencies in carrying out their obligations.

## Health and Safety Services

The City of Los Banos Police and Fire Departments provide police, fire, and life-safety services within the city. Additional police and fire protection services within unincorporated areas is provided by Merced County Sheriff and Fire Departments. The locations of both city and county police, fire, and life-safety stations are illustrated in Figure 7-7.

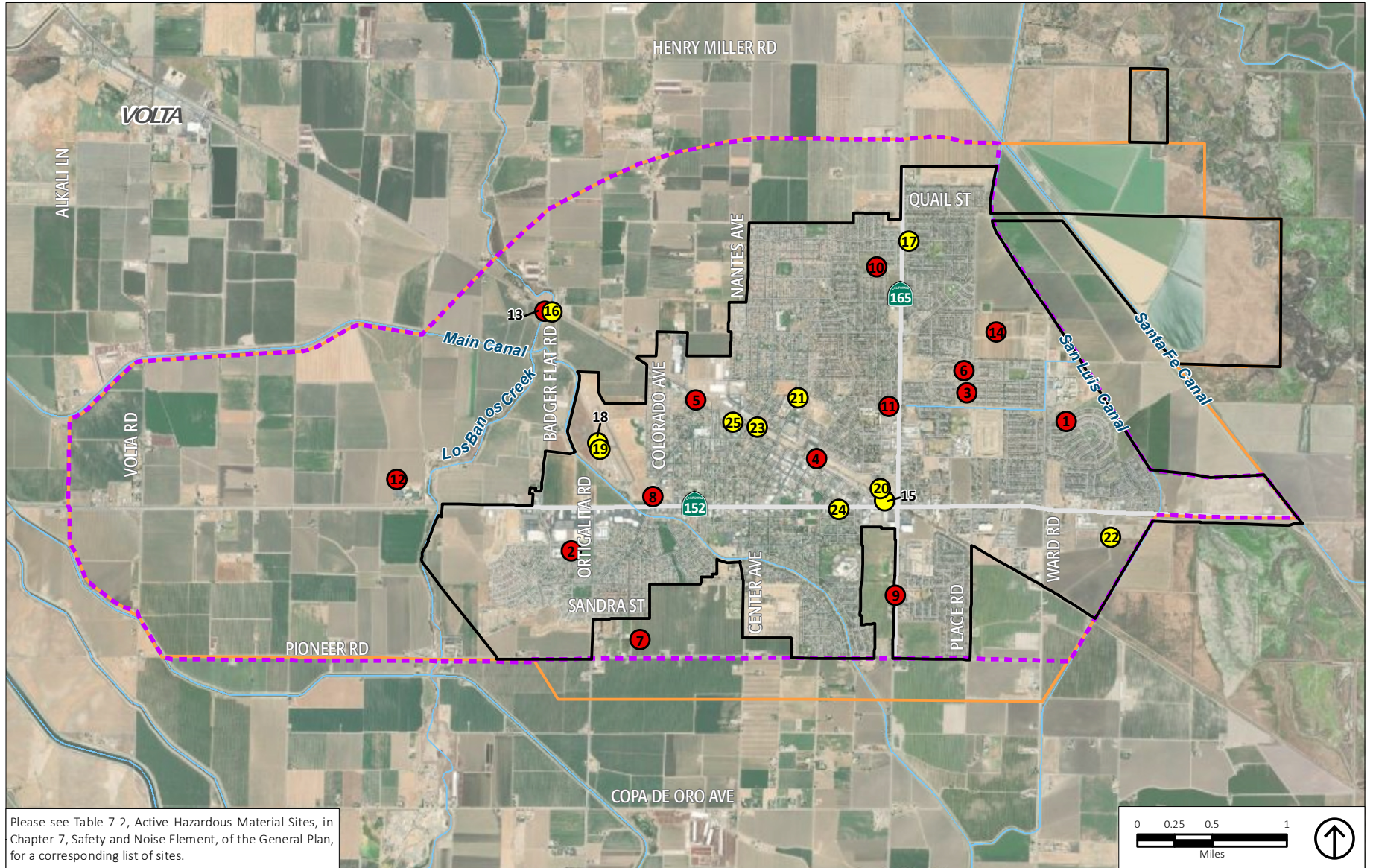
### *Police Services*

The Los Banos Police Department (LBPD) operates out of one central Police Headquarters office downtown. To respond to future growth, LBPD has plans to replace the current, aging (1969) police facility and jail with funds from the public safety sales tax. The new facility will be adjacent to the Merced County Courthouse on G Street.

Responsibilities of the LBPD include responding to crime, code enforcement, traffic enforcement, and providing police patrols within the city limits. The LBPD also maintains several programs, including the Police Activities League, Volunteer Interacting to Advance Law Enforcement, and community involvement groups and events.

The Merced County Sheriff's Department is responsible for law enforcement in the unincorporated areas surrounding the city. The LBPD operates a "Westside" substation in the City of Los Banos and serves Gustine, Santa Nella, Volta, Santa Rita Park, and South Dos Palos.

SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



- City Limit
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- GeoTracker Sites
- EnviroStor Cleanup Program Sites

Figure 7-6  
Active Hazardous Material Sites

**TABLE 7-2: ACTIVE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SITES**

Map ID	Site Name	Address	Site Type	Potential Contaminants	Cleanup Status
<b>Envirostor Cleanup Program Sites <sup>1</sup></b>					
1	Arcadian High School	B Street/Ward Rd	School Investigation	Metals, Pesticides	No Further Action
2	Badger Flat Middle School	Badger Flat Rd/ Prairie Springs Dr	School Investigation	Metals, Pesticides	No Further Action
3	Elementary School #2/ Ranchwood Property	18761 Willmont Rd	School Investigation	Metals, Pesticides	No Further Action
4	Former Union Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way	Between 2nd St and Mercey Springs	Evaluation	None Specified	Refer: Local Agency
5	Los Banos Community School	Texas Ave/H St	School Investigation	None Specified	No Action Required
6	Los Banos ES #2 Expansion Site	Willmott Ave/Las Palmas St	School Investigation	Arsenic, Pesticides	No Action Required
7	Los Banos Middle School #2	Pioneer Rd/I St Alignment	School Investigation	Arsenic, Pesticides	No Further Action
8	Los Banos Municipal Airport	I St/Airport Rd	Evaluation	Pesticides, Unspecified Aqueous Solution	Inactive – Needs Evaluation
9	Mercey Springs Elementary School	16570 Mercey Springs Rd	School Investigation	Metals, Pesticides	No Further Action
10	Old Los Banos Dump	Parkwood Ave/ Ranchwood Ave	State Response	Lead	Certified
11	R. M. Miano Elementary School	B St/Santa Rita St	School Investigation	None Specified	No Action Required
12	Special Education/ Child Development Facility	22240 State Highway 152	School Investigation	Arsenic, Pesticides	No Further Action
13	Trent Pump Station	21425 Ingomar Rd	Voluntary Cleanup	Benzene (B), Toluene (T), Ethylbenzene (E), Xylene (X), Petroleum-containing waste	Inactive – Needs Evaluation
14	Vineyard School Site	Overland Rd	School Investigation	Arsenic, Lead	No Further Action





**TABLE 7-2: ACTIVE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SITES**

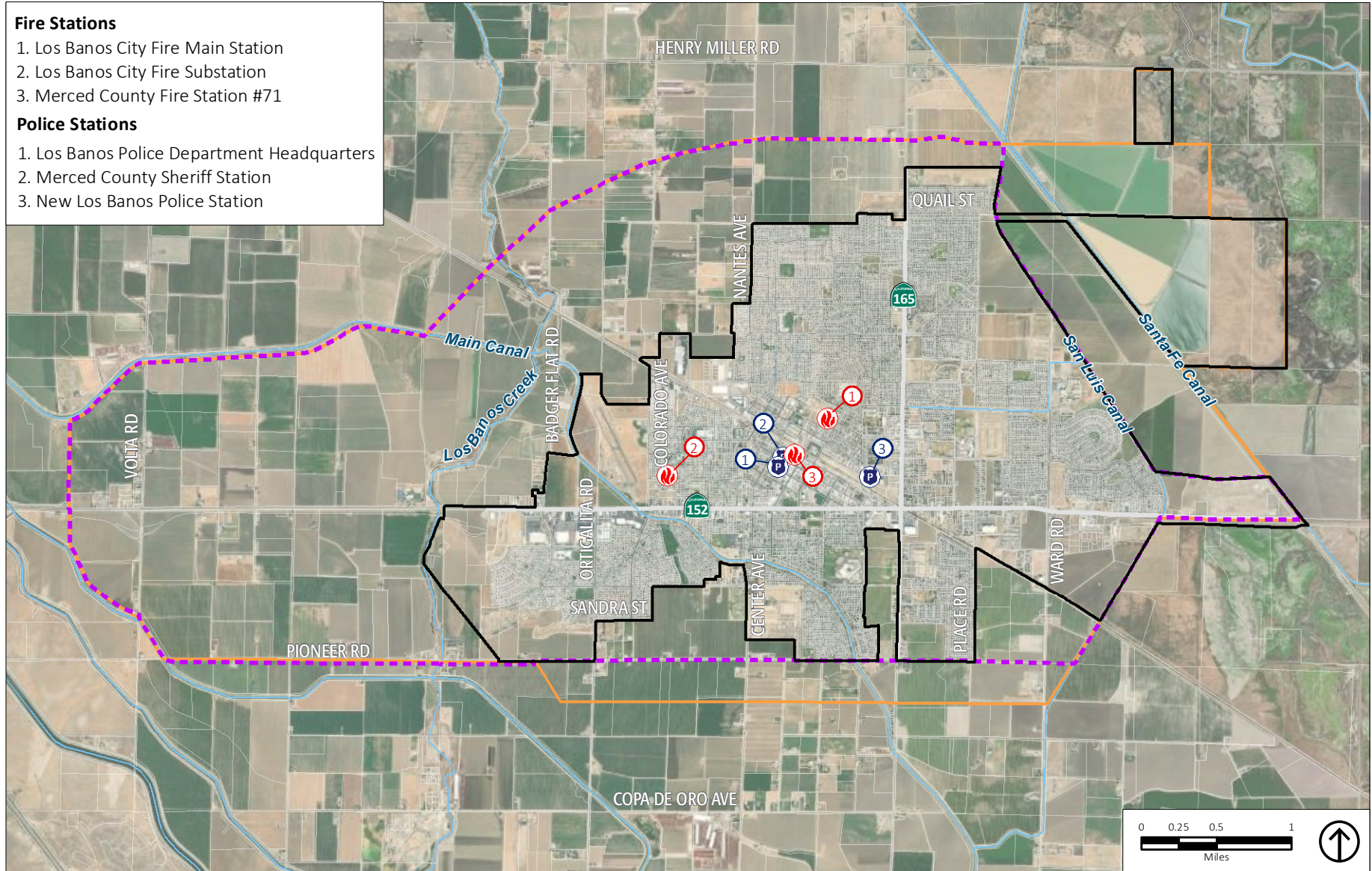
Map ID	Site Name	Address	Site Type	Potential Contaminants	Cleanup Status
<b>GeoTracker Sites <sup>2</sup></b>					
15	Becker Estate, Former Becker Oil Term., Los Banos	1330 Pacheco Pass Blvd	Cleanup Program Site	Diesel, Gasoline, Methyl tert-Butyl Ether (MTBE), Tert-Butyl Alcohol (TBA), Other Fuel Oxygenates	Open - Remediation
16	Former Trent Pump Station	21425 Ingomar Rd	Cleanup Program Site	Crude Oil	Open – Site Assessment
17	Lister Ag Aviation	P.O. Box 31	Cleanup Program Site	Fertilizer	Open – Inactive
18	Los Banos Airport	None West I St/Hwy 152	Cleanup Program Site	Pesticides, Metals, Fumigants	Open – Inactive
19	Los Banos Airport	1 Mile West of Los Banos	Cleanup Program Site	Pesticides, Herbicides	Open – Inactive
20	Los Banos Gateway Center, LLC – 1159 G Street Site	1159 G St	Cleanup Program Site	Arsenic	Open – Site Assessment
21	Merced County Spring Fair	360 D St	LUST Cleanup Site	Gasoline	Open – Eligible For Closure
22	Meza Brothers, Inc.	2657 E Pacheco Blvd	LUST Cleanup Site	Diesel, Gasoline, PCE	Open – Eligible For Closure
23	Pacheco Oil	740 Second St	Cleanup Program Site	Arsenic, Diesel	Open – Site Assessment
24	Santos Texaco #2	1009 E Pacheco Blvd	LUST Cleanup Site	Diesel, Gasoline, Waste Oil, Motor Oil, Hydraulic Oil, Lubricating Oil	Open – Site Assessment
25	Tosco Bulk Plant #0382	101 H St	LUST Cleanup Site	Diesel, Gasoline, PCE	Open – Site Assessment

Sources:

1. Department of Toxic Substances Control, 2022, EnviroStor, <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>, accessed January 31, 2022
2. State Water Resources Control Board, 2022, GeoTracker, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>, accessed January 31, 2022.



SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



- City Limit
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- 🔥 Fire Station
- 👮 Police Station

Figure 7-7  
Police and Fire Stations



### ***Fire and Life-Safety Services***

The Los Banos Fire Department (LBFD) currently operates two fire stations (Station 1 and Station 2), while the Merced County Fire Department operates one station, Station 71, within Los Banos city limits. Fire dispatch is handled through the LBPD. The LBFD provides first responder and emergency medical technician (EMT) services within the city limits. They also provide Automatic Aid for confirmed structure fires within identified proximity to city limits and mutual aid for fire/rescue and EMS services to other local agencies in Merced County, and participate in the statewide Master Mutual Aid plan.

As the city develops outside the current city limits, LBFD estimates that stations, equipment, and personnel will need to be added in order to maintain the current Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating and response times.

### **Local Hazard Mitigation Planning**

The Merced County Office of Emergency Services prepared the Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and followed FEMA’s 2011 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan guidance. The MJHMP includes local hazard identification, risk assessments, and mitigation actions for Los Banos. Merced County prepared the plan pursuant to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, which requires jurisdictions to adopt policies on hazard mitigation based on quantifiable vulnerability, loss, and risk analysis.

Local hazard mitigation planning seeks to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to human life and property resulting from natural and human-made hazards in Los Banos by identifying risks before they occur and putting together resources, information, and strategies for risk reduction. The County MJHMP provides guidance before, during, and after a disaster to reduce potential impacts and contains the following:

- Identifies and assesses risks of dam failure, earthquakes, flooding, severe weather, and wildfire hazards for the Planning Area;
- Provides a vulnerability assessment of population, structures, and key assets in the Planning Area;
- Assesses capabilities of each jurisdiction for addressing and responding to disasters; and
- Establishes mitigation goals and prioritizes mitigation actions for the Planning Area.

### **Climate Change and Resilience**

Climate change is driven by an increase in greenhouse gases (GHGs) in Earth’s atmosphere, trapping more heat near the surface and changing Earth’s climate in a number of ways. These changes often include increasing the frequency and severity of natural hazards, either directly (such as causing summer temperatures to reach dangerously high levels) or indirectly (such as warm temperatures and droughts leading to more dry vegetation, increasing wildfire risks). The hazard situations created or exacerbated by climate change may result in an

increased chance of personal injury or other harm, a greater risk of damage to buildings and infrastructure, and disruption of essential services, among other hardships.

In the Central Valley region around Los Banos, climate change is expected to lead to warmer temperatures, creating a risk of more frequent and intense heat waves that can threaten human health and agricultural activities. Precipitation events are likely to become more extreme, creating a risk of more intense flooding and drought cycles that may affect human, economic, and environmental health in the region. Although Los Banos does not contain any Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of regional wildfire events, which may disrupt regional activities and contribute to poor local air quality. While most community members and assets are likely to be affected by climate change, people who already face substantial challenges (including low-income persons, senior citizens, persons with underlying health effects, and undocumented or other marginalized persons, among others) are more susceptible to serious harm.

Natural features and ecosystems can help Los Banos remain resilient to climate change.

## Noise

### *Noise Characteristics and Measurement*

Noises vary widely in their scope, source, and volume, ranging from individual occurrences, such as leaf blowers, to the intermittent disturbances of overhead aircraft, to the fairly constant noise generated by traffic on freeways. Noise is primarily a concern with regard to noise-sensitive uses, such as residences, schools, churches, and hospitals.

### *Noise Measurement*

Noise is commonly defined as undesirable or unwanted sound. The following definitions are useful in understanding community noise exposure.

- **Decibel Level.** (e.g., magnitude or loudness) of sound. Sound levels are measured and expressed in decibels (dB) with 10 dB roughly equal to the threshold of hearing. Table 7-3 shows the decibel levels associated with different common sounds.
- **A-Weighted Decibel (dBA).** An overall frequency-weighted sound level in decibels that approximates the frequency response of the human ear.





**TABLE 7-3: TYPICAL NOISE LEVELS**

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Outdoor Activities
Onset of physical discomfort	120+	
	110	Rock Band (near amplification system)
Jet Flyover at 1,000 feet		
	100	
Gas Lawn Mower at three feet		
	90	
Diesel Truck at 50 feet, at 50 mph		Food Blender at 3 feet
	80	Garbage Disposal at 3 feet
Noisy Urban Area, Daytime		
	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 10 feet
Commercial Area		Normal speech at 3 feet
Heavy Traffic at 300 feet	60	
		Large Business Office
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Dishwasher Next Room
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Theater, Large Conference Room (background)
Quiet Suburban Nighttime		
	30	Library
Quiet Rural Nighttime		Bedroom at Night, Concert Hall (background)
	20	
		Broadcast/Recording Studio
	10	
Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing	0	Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing

Source: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2013, September. *Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol*.



- **Frequency** composition or spectrum of the sound. Frequency is a measure of the pressure fluctuations per second, measured in units of hertz (Hz). The characterization of sound level magnitude with respect to frequency is the sound spectrum, often described in octave bands, which divide the audible human frequency range (e.g., from 20 to 20,000 Hz) into 10 segments.
- **Equivalent Continuous Noise Level ( $L_{eq}$ ); also called the Energy-Equivalent Noise Level.** The value of an equivalent, steady sound level, which, in a stated time period (often over an hour) and at a stated location, has the same A-weighted sound energy as the time-varying sound. Thus, the  $L_{eq}$  metric is a single numerical value that represents the equivalent amount of variable sound energy received by a receptor over the specified duration.
- **Maximum Sound Level ( $L_{max}$ ).** The highest sound level measured during the measurement period.
- **Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL).** The energy average of the A-weighted sound levels occurring during a 24-hour period, with 5 dB added from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 10 dB from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

### ***Reporting Noise Levels***

Measuring and reporting noise levels involves accounting for variations in sensitivity to noise during the daytime versus nighttime hours. Noise descriptors used for analysis need to factor in human sensitivity to nighttime noise when background noise levels are generally lower than in the daytime and outside noise intrusions are more noticeable. Common descriptors include the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and the Day-Night Average Level (Ldn). Both reflect noise exposure over an average day with weighting to reflect the increased sensitivity to noise during the evening and night. The two descriptors are roughly equivalent. The CNEL descriptor is used in relation to major continuous noise sources, such as aircraft or traffic, and is the reference level for the Noise Element.

Knowledge of the following relationships is helpful in understanding how changes in noise and noise exposure are perceived:

- Except under special conditions, a change in sound level of 1 dBA cannot be perceived;
- A 3 dBA change is considered a barely perceptible difference;
- A 5 dBA change is considered a readily perceptible difference; and
- A 10 dBA increase is subjectively heard as an approximate doubling in loudness and almost always causes an adverse community response.



According to common practice, noise levels up to 60 dBA CNEL are considered “normally acceptable” for single-family residential development. Noise levels from 60 dBA to 70 dBA CNEL fall within the “conditionally unacceptable” range, and those above 70 dBA CNEL range are considered “normally unacceptable” or “clearly unacceptable.” Figure 7-10, under Goal S-8 below, contains the noise and land use compatibility standards by land use in the city.

### ***Noise Sources in Los Banos***

The major noise sources of concern are SR-152, SR-165, and the Los Banos Airport. Other vehicle traffic on arterial and collector streets are also a source of noise. The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) facilities are abandoned and are no longer a noise source of concern.

### ***Traffic Noise***

Traffic noise depends primarily on the speed of traffic, the percentage of truck traffic, and the time-of-day traffic volume percentage splits (i.e., daytime, evening, and nighttime). The primary source of noise from automobiles is higher-frequency tire noise, which increases with speed. In addition, trucks and older automobiles produce considerable engine and exhaust noise. While tire noise from cars is generally located at ground level, truck noise sources can be located as high as 10 to 15 feet above the road surface due to tall exhaust stacks and higher engines; therefore, sound walls may not be effective for mitigating traffic noise unless they are tall enough to block line-of-sight between the source and receiver. The increase in electric vehicles on

California roads is expected to lead to a decrease in engine noise as a component of traffic noise. However, at speeds above 20 to 30 miles per hour (mph), tire-pavement noise is the dominant sound source. So, along highways and major roadways, the perception of traffic noise will likely remain similar over the life of this General Plan. Traffic noise exposure contours for Los Banos were modeled using the Federal Highway Administration’s noise modeling procedures. These noise contours are conservative, meaning that the contours are conservatively modeled without additional noise attenuation by natural barriers, buildings, etc. The noise level measured at a specific location may be lower than what is shown on the noise contour map.

Future development within the City’s Planning Area will result in increased traffic volumes, thus increasing noise levels in some areas. Increased traffic volumes on roadways will result in increased noise exposure for adjacent and nearby development. Additionally, continued growth of the city—residential as well as commercial and industrial uses—will further increase traffic and noise levels on arterial roadways. Future (Year 2042) noise contours are illustrated in Figure 7-9, under Goal S-8, below.

The predominant current and future noise source in Los Banos is motor vehicle and truck traffic on SR-152 and SR-165, which currently bisect the city north-south and east-west. Increased traffic on SR-152 and SR-165 and on Los Banos’ arterial streets can be expected to increase noise exposure for sensitive receptors along these thoroughfares.

Arterial streets with substantial noise levels include Ward Road from Pioneer to Henry Miller Road, Mercey Springs Road (SR-165), West I Street, south of Pacheco Boulevard, Badger Flat Road from Capri Avenue to Pioneer Road, H Street-Ingomar Grade Road west of 7th, I Street north of Pacheco Boulevard, Pacheco Boulevard, and Pioneer Road from Los Banos Creek to Ward Road. In general, auto traffic volumes will increase and, along with them, greater noise levels will be experienced.

### ***Los Banos Municipal Airport***

In 2015, annual operations (takeoffs and landings) at Los Banos Municipal Airport were estimated at around 16,000, averaging approximately 44 flights per day. Figure 7-8 shows the most recent CNEL noise contours at the Los Banos Municipal Airport based on the 2012 Merced County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Until a decision is made to relocate the airport, the City will not permit new non-compatible uses in the immediate vicinity of the airport.

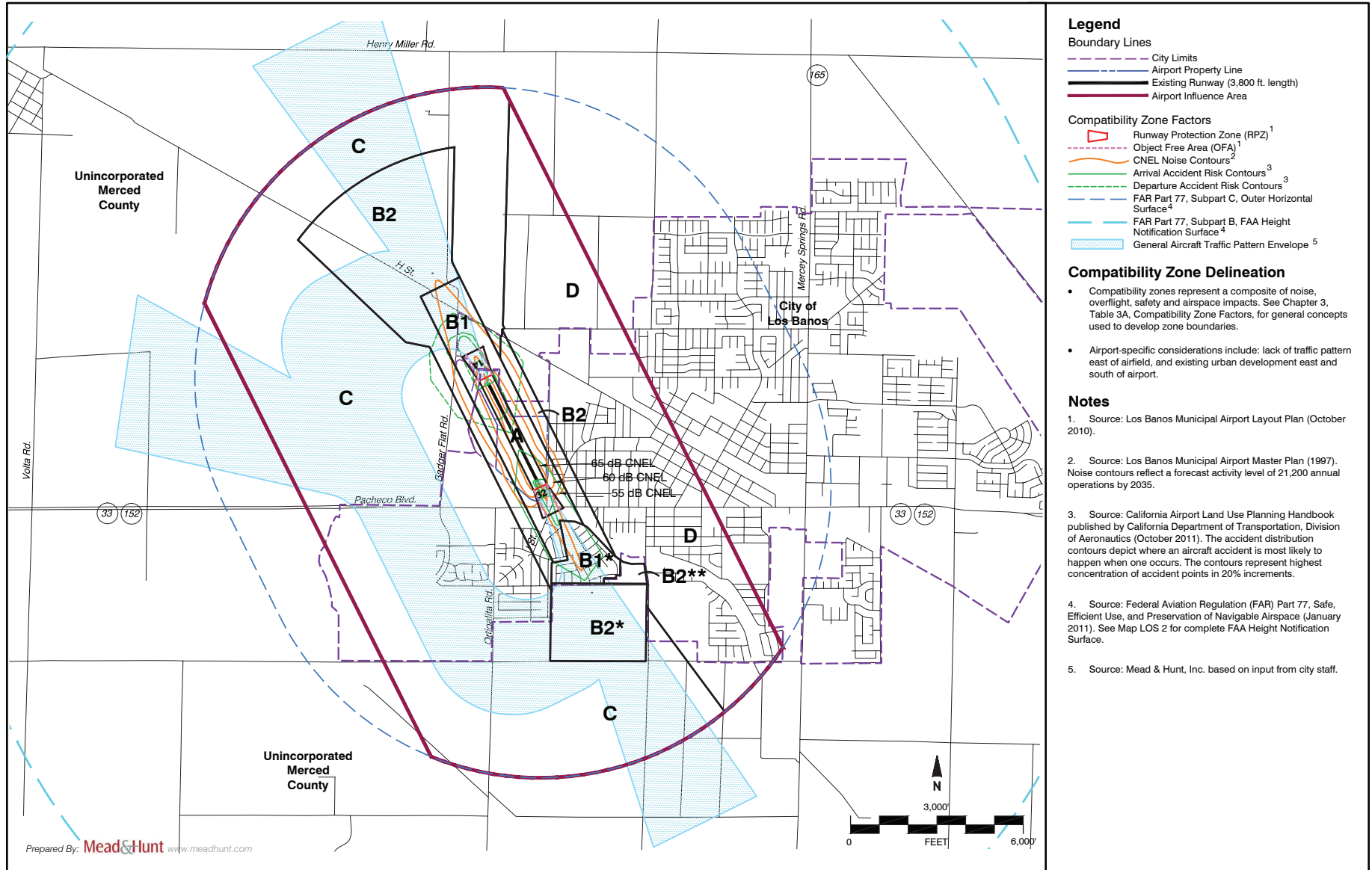
### ***Vibration***

Vibration is an oscillating motion that is transmitted in waves through the earth or solid objects. It is generally felt rather than heard. High levels of ground-borne vibration can be due to rock blasting, construction, or railway and transit movement.

Since the UPRR facilities are abandoned, they are no longer a vibration source of concern. Studies by Caltrans found that vibration levels measured on freeway shoulders (five meters from the centerline of the nearest lane) do not exceed the maximum

safe level for historic buildings and ancient ruins even under the worst combinations of heavy trucks and poor roadway conditions. Therefore, vibration from on-road vehicle traffic is not a significant concern. Certain construction activities, such as pile driving and the use of vibratory rollers, may generate unacceptable levels of vibration when close to sensitive buildings and structures and should be mitigated where necessary to reduce the possibility of architectural damage.

SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



Sources: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks 2022

Figure 7-8  
Los Banos Municipal Airport Noise Contours



## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### GOAL S-1

Minimize risks of property damage and personal injury posed by seismic hazards, soil hazards, and erosion.

### POLICIES

- Policy S-P1.1 Review proposed development sites at the earliest stage of the planning process to locate any potential geologic or seismic hazards.
- Policy S-P1.2 Require mitigation for buildings that change occupancy or use that require a permit for structural alterations, especially unreinforced masonry buildings, to ensure structural safety.
- Policy S-P1.3 Require utilities be designed to withstand probable seismic forces to be encountered in Los Banos.
- Policy S-P1.4 Require preparation of a soils report as part of the development review and/or building permit process.

- Policy S-P1.5 Control erosion of graded areas with revegetation or other acceptable methods.
- Policy S-P1.6 Maintain grading and landscaping regulations to reduce soil erosion potential, including:
  - Planning and conducting operations and construction activities in a manner that will not disturb extensive areas of soil or that will disrupt local drainage;
  - Prohibiting organic or earthen material from being discharged into any canals or waterways or placed at locations where they can pass into canals or waterways in quantities that could impair any beneficial use of the water.
- Policy S-P1.7 Require that alterations to existing buildings and all new buildings be built according to the seismic requirements of the current California Building Code.
- Policy S-P1.8 Require aboveground storage tanks to be located and regularly inspected to minimize potential risks to life and property.



**GOAL**  
**S-2**

**Protect the community from risks to lives and property posed by flooding and stormwater runoff.**

**POLICIES**

- Policy S-P2.1      Require new development to prepare hydrologic studies and implement appropriate mitigation measures to minimize surface water run-off and reduce the risk of flooding.
  
- Policy S-P2.2      Require developers to provide for the ongoing maintenance of detention basins.
  
- Policy S-P2.3      Ensure that City staff and Emergency Response Services are trained to respond to a catastrophic dam failure, according to emergency procedures outlined by Merced County Office of Emergency Services' Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**ACTIONS**

- Action S-A2.1*      Determine, locate, and improve deficiencies in the existing drainage infrastructure in partnership with regional and federal agencies.
  
- Action S-A2.2*      Maintain and regularly update the Storm Drain Master Plan.
  
- Action S-A2.3*      Coordinate with the Merced County Department of Public Works, Merced County Office of Emergency Services, California Department of Water Resources, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on potential flooding risks, including risks associated with dam failure.

## GOAL S-3

Protect Los Banos' ecosystem and residents from harm resulting from the improper production, use, storage, disposal, or transportation of hazardous materials.

### POLICIES

- Policy S-P3.1 Apply provisions on the Merced County Hazardous Waste Management Plan to decisions involving hazardous materials in Los Banos as appropriate.
- Policy S-P3.2 Discourage the placement or expansion of businesses producing, using, or storing hazardous materials within a quarter mile of schools, hospitals, and residential neighborhoods. If hazardous materials facilities are within a quarter-mile, require effective mitigation measures.
- Policy S-P3.3 Require that any proposed new development on identified or suspected hazardous materials sites address hazardous materials through the preparation of Phase I or Phase II hazardous materials studies for each identified site as part of the design phase for each project.

- Policy S-P3.4 Require remediation and cleanup of sites contaminated with hazardous substances.

### ACTIONS

- Action S-A3.1* Coordinate enforcement of the Hazardous Material Disclosure Program with the Merced County Health Department to identify facilities producing, using, or storing hazardous wastes.
- Action S-A3.2* Promote the reduction, recycling, and safe disposal of household hazardous wastes through public education and awareness.
- Action S-A3.3* Review, update, and implement the City's Hazardous Material Plan on a continual basis. This will include preparing guidelines on transporting hazardous material and the need for coordination with the California Highway Patrol.



**GOAL**  
**S-4**

**Protect Los Banos' residents and businesses from potential wildfire and structural fire hazards through data-driven decision-making and community planning efforts.**

**POLICIES**

- Policy S-P4.1 Maintain a five- to six-minute response standard for fire service within a 1.5-mile radius of a fire station.
- Policy S-P4.2 Require adequate firefighting infrastructure and access for emergency vehicles in all new development, including adequate street width, vertical clearance on new streets, high-visibility street signs in all conditions, and minimum water pressure necessary for sustained fire suppression.
- Policy S-P4.3 Ensure Fire Department personnel are trained in wildfire prevention, response, and evacuation procedures.

**ACTIONS**

- Action S-A4.1* Assess the manpower, facility, and equipment needs of police and fire services as the city undergoes expansion to provide all residents with an optimal level of protection.
- Action S-A4.2* Maintain mutual aid agreements with Merced County, Cal Fire, and nearby cities.
- Action S-A4.3* Create a public awareness and weed abatement program to highlight the dangers of open burning and how homeowners can protect their properties from wildfires.



**GOAL**  
**S-5**

Maintain and enhance the City’s capacity for law enforcement.

**POLICIES**

Policy S-P5.1 Promote crime prevention strategies and provide a high level of response to incidents. Reduce crime in Los Banos through a comprehensive strategy that includes rapid response to calls and regular patrols in neighborhoods with above-average crime rates.

**ACTIONS**

- Action S-A5.1* Support public education programs involving crime prevention and safety issues.
- Action S-A5.2* Maintain mutual aid agreements with Merced County, neighboring law enforcement agencies, and the California Highway Patrol.

**GOAL**  
**S-6**

Minimize the risk of personal injury, property damage, and environmental damage from both natural and human-made disasters and improve natural disaster response capabilities through a variety of emergency preparedness measures.

**POLICIES**

- Policy S-P6.1 Increase the resilience of important or critical-use structures (such as hospitals, schools, fire, police, cooling centers, and public assembly facilities, substations, and utilities) through input during site selection and a comprehensive investigation into existing fire, flooding, and geotechnical conditions and to ensure that these facilities are operable both mid- and post-disaster events that affect Los Banos.
- Policy S-P6.2 The Merced County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2021, is incorporated by reference into this Safety Element in accordance with Assembly Bill 2140.



**ACTIONS**

- Action S-A6.1* Continue to participate in County-led efforts to regularly update and implement the Merced County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP), consistent with guidelines of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Disaster Act of 2000.
- Action S-A6.2* Work with owners and operators of critical-use facilities (i.e., hospitals, police stations, public assembly facilities, transportation services) to ensure that they can provide alternate sources of electricity, water, and sewerage in the event that regular utilities are interrupted in a disaster.
- Action S-A6.3* Maintain and improve current early-warning systems and response facilities (Local Emergency Operations Center, National Warning System, civil preparedness radio systems, etc.).
- Action S-A6.4* Coordinate regular emergency drills with City and County emergency service providers.

- Action S-A6.5* Collaborate and exchange information with other local, state, and federal agencies and with utility service providers in activities related to terrorism prevention and response.
- Action S-A6.6* Develop and adopt an emergency evacuation route network of roadways accounting for how natural hazards could impact the feasibility of each route and work with the County of Merced Office of Emergency Services to ensure that each route connects to regional evacuation routes.

## GOAL S-7

Improve Los Banos' resilience to existing and future climate change hazards, such as drier conditions, warmer temperatures, flooding, increased wildfire risks, and increased energy use to address changing temperatures and weather patterns.

### ACTIONS

- Action S-A7.1* Identify areas of the city where climate change is anticipated to create or increase hazard risks, such as flooding. Identify development methods to reduce hazard risks and increase the resilience of any projects in these areas.
- Action S-A7.2* Pursue and support opportunities to retrofit and harden important sets of infrastructure, such as roadways, bridges, flood-control channels, telecommunications, and energy delivery systems.

- Action S-A7.3* Update the Safety Element on a regular basis, as required by the California Government Code, in concert with the Los Banos' General Plan Housing Element to ensure the document's relevance to future safety conditions in the city. When updates to other safety documents occur, incorporate, and make the Safety Element consistent with these updates.
- Action S-A7.4* Incorporate nature-based environmental design and green infrastructure (e.g., permeable surfaces to encourage natural drainage, drought-adapted species to reduce water consumption, plantings with strong root systems to reduce erosion) into existing and new development, as feasible.
- Action S-A7.5* Collaborate on existing and future hazard risks stemming from climate change with Merced County and the Merced County Association of Governments.
- Action S-A7.6* Continue to pursue local energy generation and resilience projects, such as the Wright Solar power plant, rooftop renewable energy systems, and battery storage systems.



*Action S-A7.7* Pursue grant funding from programs, such as the California Department of Conservation’s Best Practices Pilot Program, that increase the resilience and sustainability of future development in Los Banos.

*Action S-A7.8* Support the development of resilience hubs throughout the city that can function as refuge centers for evacuees or victims otherwise impacted by hazards as well as command centers with energy and communications redundancies to support government operations during and after a hazard event.

**GOAL**  
**S-8** Strive to achieve an acceptable noise environment for the present and future residents of Los Banos.

**POLICIES**

*Policy S-P8.1* Use the community noise level exposure standards, shown in Figure 7-10, as review criteria for new land uses.

*Policy S-P8.2* Require a noise study and mitigation measures for all projects that have noise exposure greater than “normally acceptable” levels based on Table 7-3. Require that new multifamily and single-family housing projects, hotels, and motels exposed to a Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) of 60 decibels (dB) or greater have a detailed acoustical analysis describing how the project will provide an interior CNEL of 45 dB or less, pursuant to Title 24, Part 2, of the California Code of Regulations. These measures may include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

- Screen and control noise sources, such as parking and loading facilities, outdoor activities, and mechanical equipment;
- Increase setbacks for noise sources from adjacent dwellings;
- Install fences, walls, and landscaping that serve as noise buffers;
- Use forced-air mechanical ventilation and soundproofing materials and double-glazed windows, or a combination thereof; and



- Control hours of operation, including deliveries and trash pickup, to minimize noise impacts.

Policy S-P8.3 Promote the use of noise attenuation measures to improve the acoustic environment inside residences where existing single-family residential development is located on an arterial street.

Policy S-P8.4 Discourage sound walls, except along freeways, unless they are needed as a measure of last resort. In all other instances, permit sound walls only upon finding that alternative noise attenuation measures are not available. As an alternative to sound walls, use “quiet pavement,” such as rubberized asphalt or open-grade asphalt concrete overlays. Roadway noise reduction of up to 6-7 dBA compared to conventional asphalt overlay may be possible, but the effective lifespan of such pavement should be considered.

Policy S-P8.5 Protect especially sensitive uses, including schools, hospitals, and senior care facilities, from excessive noise.

Policy S-P8.6 Require the use of Best Available Control Technology (BACT) to minimize noise from all stationary sources as well as mobile/temporary sources, such as operation of construction equipment.

## ACTIONS

*Action S-A8.1* Prohibit long-term noise increases above the following at existing sensitive receptor property lines (e.g., from traffic noise increases), or new uses that generate noise levels at a sensitive receptor property line:

- Greater than 1.5 dBA CNEL increase for ambient noise environments of 65 dBA CNEL and higher;
- Greater than 3 dBA CNEL increase for ambient noise environments of 60 - 64 CNEL; and
- Greater than 5 dBA CNEL increase for ambient noise environments of less than 60 dBA CNEL.

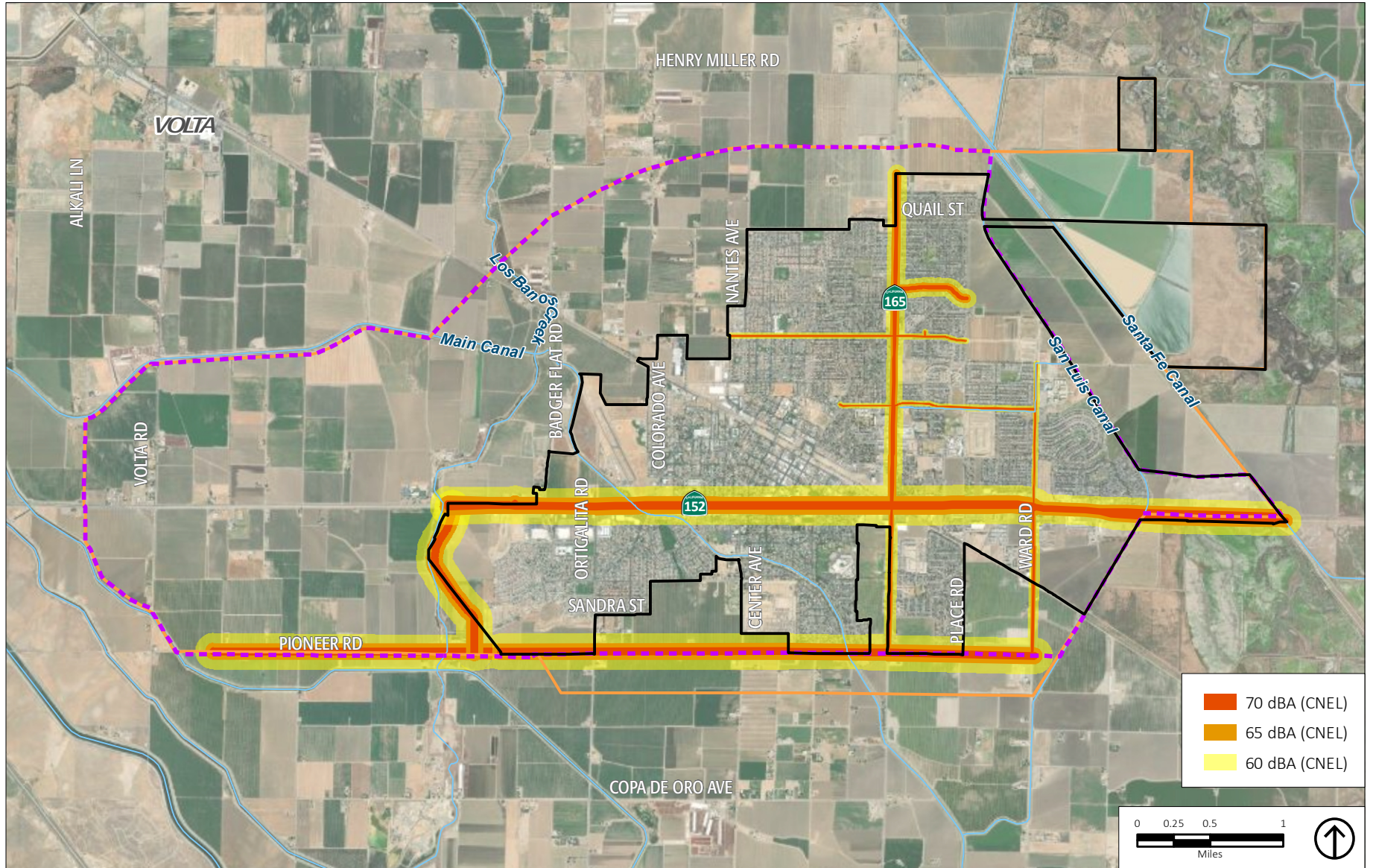


For projects that exceed these noise increases due to project-generated traffic noise, a “fair share” fund shall be considered where projects exceeding these increases pay into a fund for roadway improvements (e.g., repaving with “quiet pavement” to reduce traffic noise levels).

*Action S-A8.2* Work with the Los Banos Airport to minimize noise impacts of flight operations on existing noise-sensitive development.

*Action S-A8.3* The City shall establish and adopt a list of construction best management practices to be implemented during the construction phase and incorporated into Los Banos Municipal Code Article 27, *Noise Control*, to protect noise sensitive receptors (e.g., residences, schools, and hospitals) from the temporary effects of construction noise. The City of Los Banos Building Department shall verify that construction best management practices, as appropriate, are on the demolition, grading, and construction plans prior to issuance of demolition, grading and/or building permits.

SAFETY AND NOISE ELEMENT



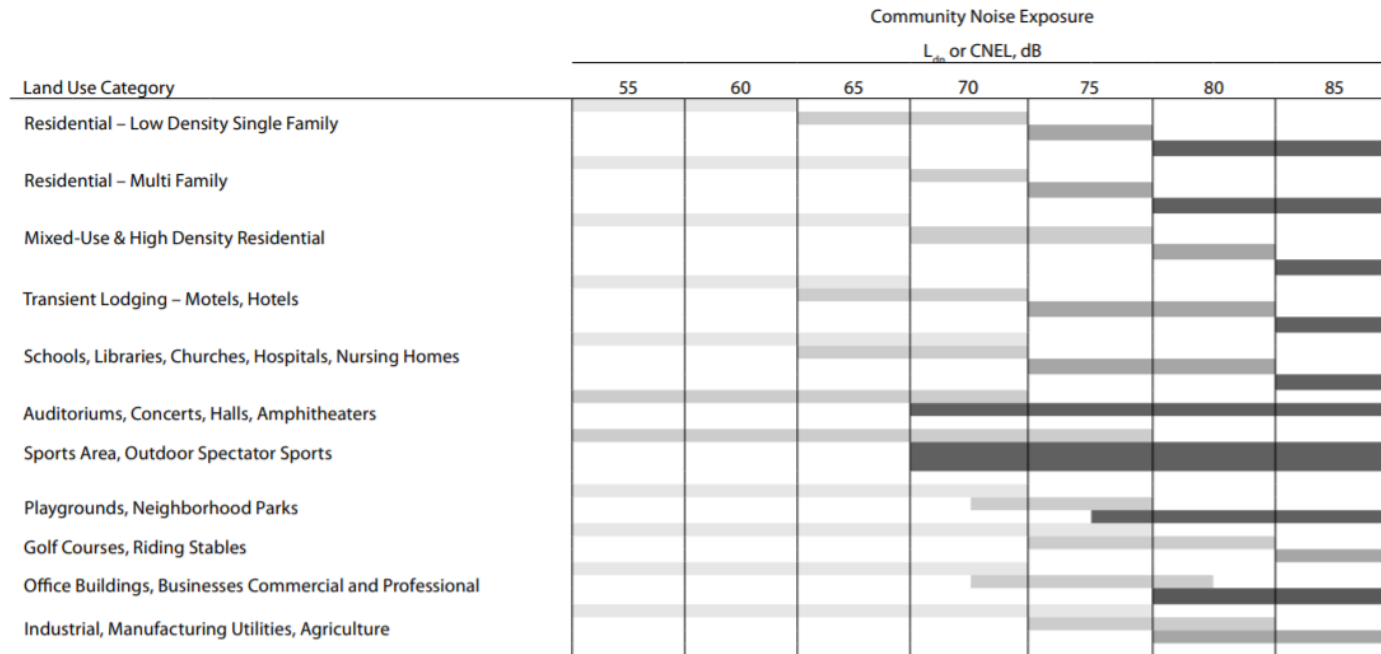
Source: National Resource Conservation Service, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2022.

City Limit
  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
  Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Figure 7-9  
Future 2042 Noise Contours



**Figure 7-10 Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments**



Legend:

- Normally Acceptable** Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any building involved is of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.
- Conditionally Acceptable** New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.
- Normally Unacceptable** New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.
- Clearly Unacceptable** New construction or development should not be undertaken.

Source: City of Los Banos, 2007.



# 8 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

*The Public Facilities and Services Element addresses public facility and infrastructure needs for Los Banos and establishes goals, policies, and actions to ensure that public facilities and services are available to serve existing and new development. This Element focuses on specific functional needs of the City’s public services and facilities, and clearly distinguishes issues related to City services from those related to other service providers over which the City has no control. It addresses schools, community facilities, water, stormwater, wastewater, solid waste and recycling services, and energy, as well as ensuring that these services and facilities are available to all residents of Los Banos. Public safety services, including police and fire, are covered in Chapter 7, Safety and Noise.*

**Contents**

- 1 Schools and Community Facilities
- 2 Water, Stormwater, and Wastewater
- 3 Solid Waste Management and Recycling
- 4 Energy
- 5 Environmental Justice
- 6 Goals, Policies, and Actions

**TABLE 8-1: COMMUNITY SERVICE BY SERVICE PROVIDER**

Type of Service	Providing Agency
Schools (K-12)	Los Banos Unified School District
Schools (College)	Merced Community College District
Parks and Recreation	City of Los Banos
Police	City of Los Banos
Fire Protection	City of Los Banos
Street Maintenance	City of Los Banos
Water Service	City of Los Banos
Storm Drainage	City of Los Banos
Solid Waste	City of Los Banos
Sewer Service/ Wastewater Treatment	City of Los Banos
Electricity	Pacific Gas & Electric
Natural Gas	Pacific Gas & Electric
Telephone	AT&T

Table 8-1 summarizes community services in the City of Los Banos by service provider.



## Schools and Community Facilities

### *Schools*

Public schools in the Planning Area are operated by the Los Banos Unified School District (LBUSD). Figure 8-1 shows all school facilities in the Planning Area. All schools are within a quarter-mile walking distance of either a park or school open space facility. LBUSD also operates an adult education program, preschool, transitional kindergarten center, and Learning Educational Activities Program (LEAP), a before/after school program.

The LBUSD controls the exact size and location of future school sites and determines need for new facilities based on capacity of existing facilities, current and projected enrollment of students, and projected residential growth. New school facilities are required to be located within walking distance of neighborhoods so that they are safe and accessible to students and families. The City and LBUSD have a well-established relationship and communicate regularly regarding planned development, projections of new students, and need for new or enlarged facilities. LBUSD and the City also work closely together to maintain joint access to playground and sports facilities, as noted in Chapter 6, Parks, Open Space, and Conservation.

In addition, children in Los Banos attend a range of religious, charter, and private schools.

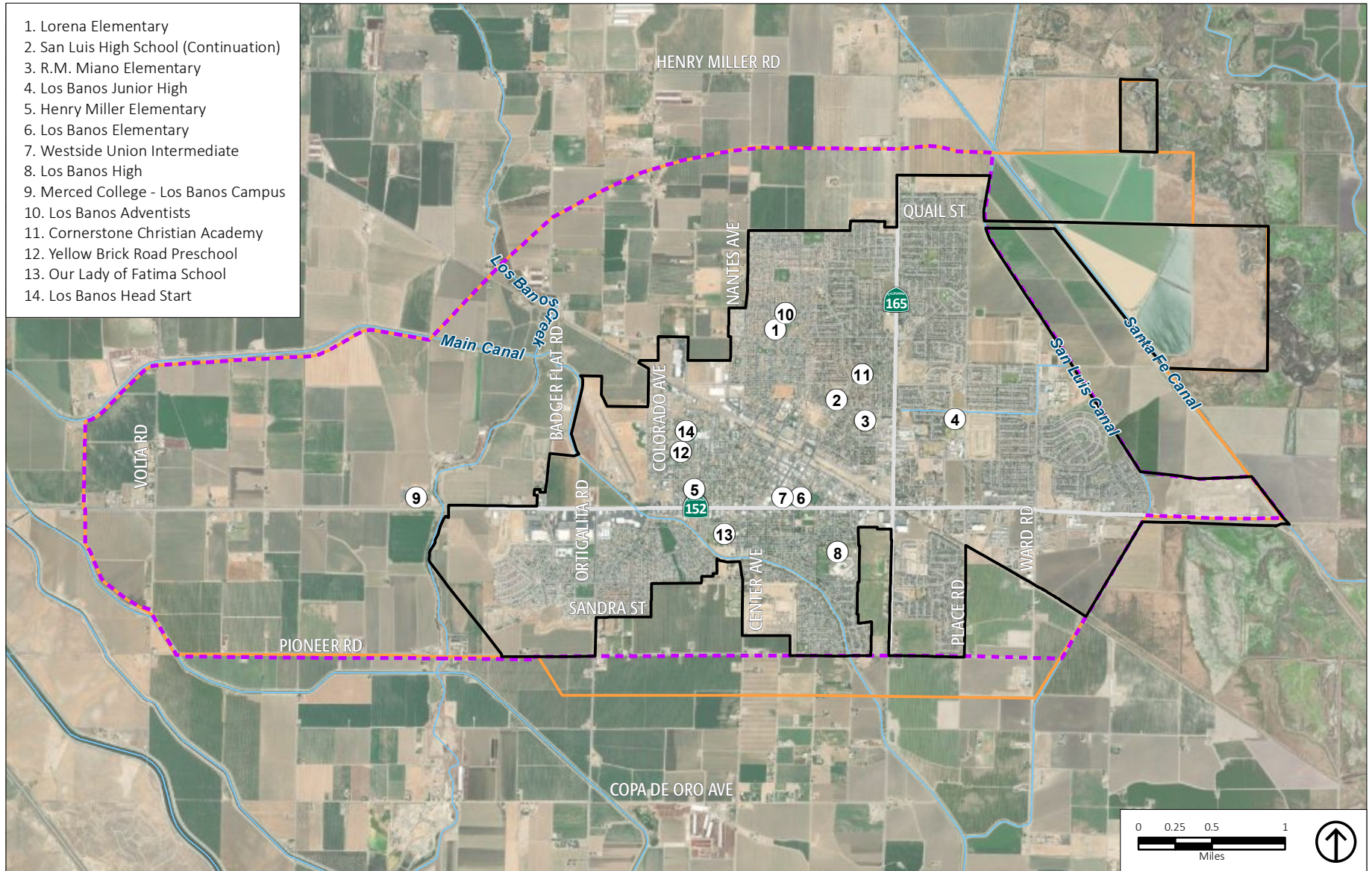
The Merced College Los Banos campus is west of Los Banos Creek on the north side of State Route (SR-) 152. At the Los Banos campus, students can earn associate's degrees in arts or science programs, as well as complete various certificate programs and workforce-oriented classes.

### *Community Facilities*

Community facilities are the network of public and private institutions that support the civic and social needs of the population. They offer a variety of recreational, artistic, and educational programs and special events. These facilities can be grouped into the following categories:

- **Community Centers.** Facilities designed to meet the needs of the population for civic meetings, recreational activities, social gatherings, and cultural enrichment.
- **Cultural Facilities.** These facilities house scientific and historical exhibits or offer space for artistic performances and presentations.
- **Civic Buildings.** These include City and County administrative and public buildings.
- **Libraries.** Facilities in which literary, artistic, and reference materials are kept for public use and circulation. The Los Banos Branch Merced County Library at 1312 Seventh Street near Downtown is one of the most heavily used services in the city.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES ELEMENT



Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- City Limit
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- 2 Schools

Figure 8-1  
Schools





- **Medical Facilities.** These include hospitals, public and private clinics, care facilities, and medical offices. The Memorial Hospital Los Banos (MHLB) is the largest health care provider in the city and serves residents as far as Dos Palos or Firebaugh. The MHLB has a landing pad adjacent to the hospital and is connected by helicopter with Memorial Hospital in Modesto.
- **Religious Facilities.** Religious facilities include houses of worship and other related uses.

## Water, Stormwater, and Wastewater

The Public Works Department is responsible for providing water, wastewater, and stormwater services to residents. Long-term facility planning is done with master plans, which are updated to implement this General Plan.

### *Water Distribution System*

Los Banos is in the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Region and extracts groundwater through wells from the Delta-Mendota Subbasin to meet the city's water supply needs. The wells are owned and operated by the City and deliver the water to aboveground storage tanks. The Public Works Department operates and maintains the tanks, drainage pipes, pump stations, and other infrastructure that distribute the water to residents and businesses. Figure 8-2 shows the water distribution system, including the locations of the wells throughout the city, which are generally within Los Banos city limits.

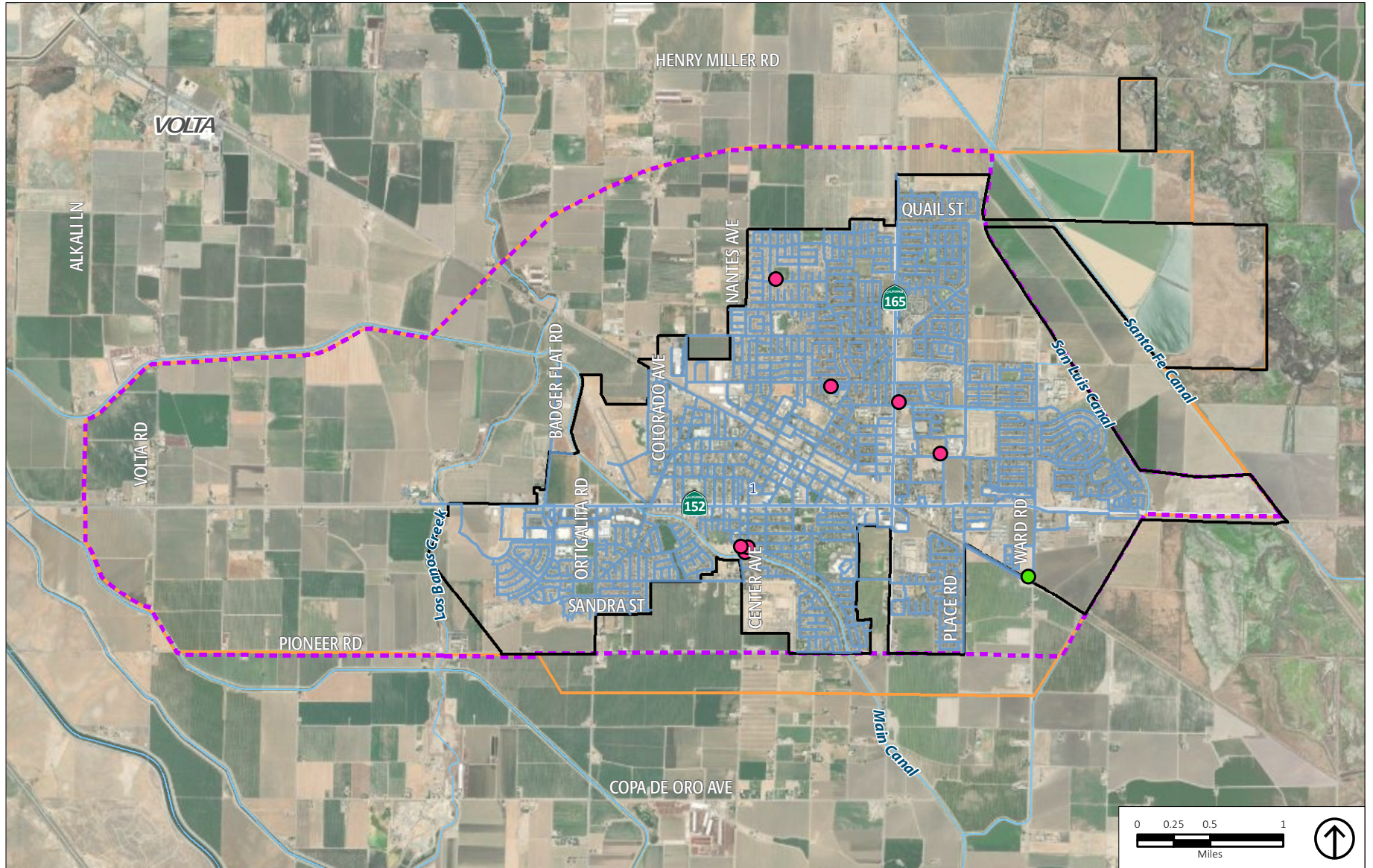
The Public Works Department is responsible for assessing water needs through regular updates to the Water Master Plan to describe the water distribution system, water usage and water demand, supply capacity and proposed improvements, and prioritization of future capital improvement projects to meet the projected increase in population demand. The Public Works Department also develops facilities and infrastructure, such as pipelines, tanks, and storage tanks.

Fire water pressure must be considered when planning capacity increases for new development. Standard minimum water flow for residential development is considered to be 2,000 gallons per minute (gpm), while for commercial and industrial development it is considered to be 3,500 gpm.

Although not required by law, the City conducted a Water Supply Assessment for General Plan 2042 and determined that there are sufficient water supplies available for the development that would be allowed under this General Plan. As annual use increases, the City will be faced with the challenge of finding alternative sources of water to supplement groundwater and provide good quality potable water. The City will continue to coordinate with the Central California Irrigation District, the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (SJREC) GSP Group, and other agencies to monitor groundwater levels in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin and explore other means to supplement groundwater. The City will also require new development to document the availability of water supply capacity, quality, and infrastructure prior to approval of new development.



PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES ELEMENT



Source: Merced County, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- City Limit
- Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Groundwater Well
- Groundwater Tank
- Water Pipeline

Figure 8-2  
Water Distribution System



### ***Water Providers***

The City of Los Banos is the primary provider to meet domestic, industrial, and commercial water demands. The Central California Irrigation District (CCID) is the primary supplier for agricultural irrigation water, drawn from surface water and groundwater supplies. Grassland Water District (GWD) also provides some irrigation water within the city limits. At present, Los Banos does not sell (wholesale) water to other agencies or surrounding regions.

### ***Groundwater Management and Water Conservation***

Los Banos is actively managing its water system to maximize resources and meet the groundwater sustainability goals of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The primary factor affecting future potable water supplies is the difficulty of finding new groundwater sources that meet drinking water standards due to naturally occurring arsenic and hexavalent chromium concentrations.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), passed in 2014, requires the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to oversee the development and implementation of GSPs to ensure the long-term sustainable management of California's groundwater resources.

Los Banos draws its water from the Delta-Mendota Subbasin, which the State of California has determined to be a high-priority subbasin and in critical overdraft. The Delta-Mendota Subbasin

has multiple GSPs. Figure 8-3 maps the subbasin, along with other water basins in the region. Los Banos is the largest city in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin. The City also serves as the local GSA and is a member of the SJREC GSP group, which developed the SJREC Group GSP.

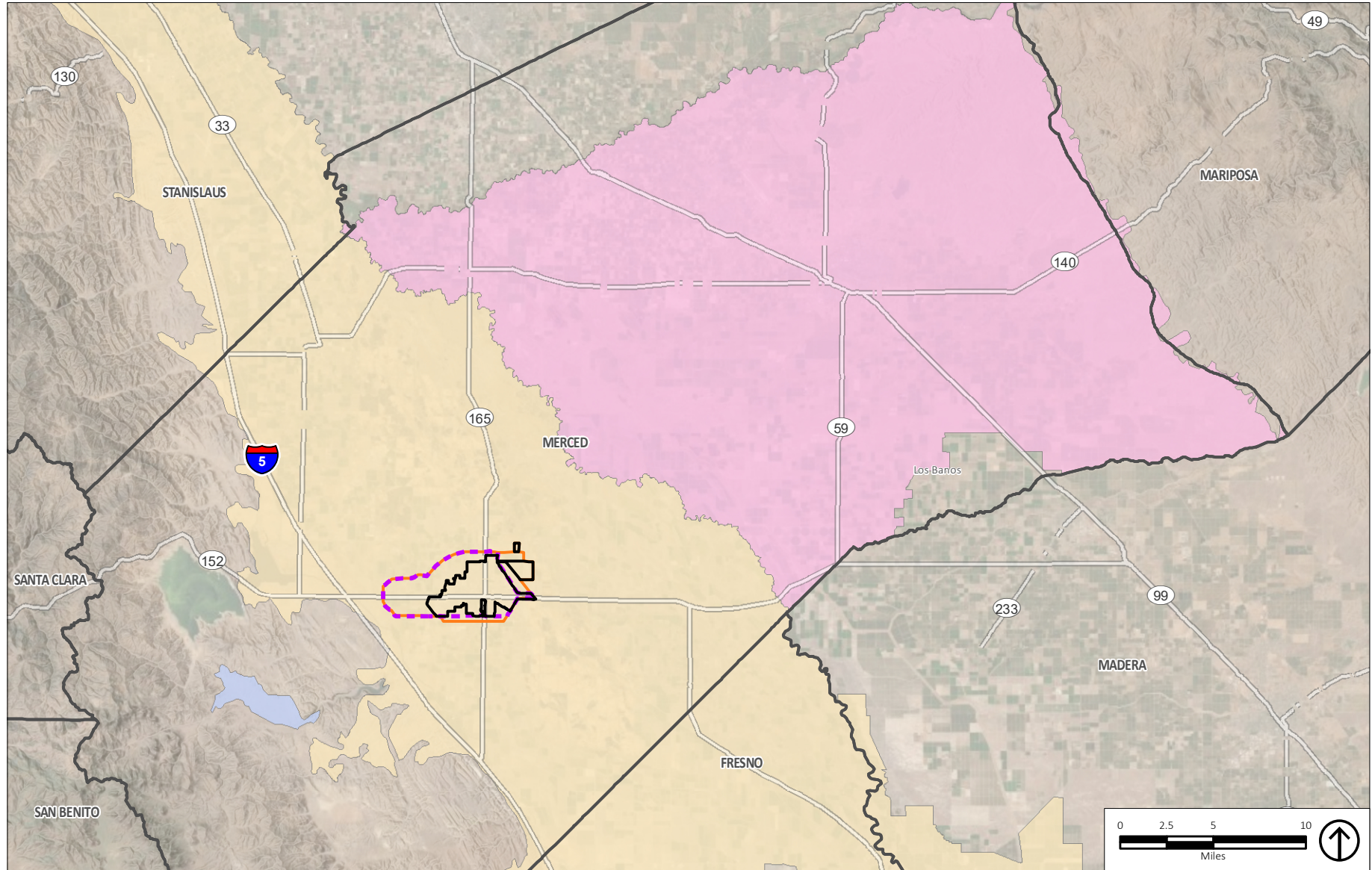
The GSP establishes groundwater sustainability goals and management and implementation activities for the basin as well as for each local GSA area, including the Los Banos GSA. However, it does not preempt local land use authority, though any updates to the General Plan would need to coordinate with the goals and activities set by the GSP. The most important components of the General Plan that are directly relevant to the GSP are policies and actions to provide additional groundwater supplies for the proposed buildout of the city while maintaining the groundwater sustainability goals outlined in the GSP.

Several projects have been realized by the SJREC as a result of implementing groundwater sustainability for the basin. One of them is the Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project, which provides 7,000 acre-feet of water supply to the SJREC during what is termed a "critical year" under the San Joaquin River Exchange Contract. This project also provided water quality benefits to Los Banos through a 2017 water recharge of Los Banos Creek. One of Los Banos' supply wells is near the creek and experienced a reduction in hexavalent chromium as a result of the recharge of higher-quality water from the project.

Domestic well users in the area also experienced improvements to their water quality.



PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES ELEMENT



Source: Merced County, 2019; California Natural Resources Agency, 2020; PlaceWorks, 2022.

- |                   |                                      |                                    |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| County Boundaries | Proposed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) | Los Banos Creek Valley             |
| City Limit        | Proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI)   | San Joaquin Valley - Delta Mendota |
|                   |                                      | San Joaquin Valley - Merced        |

Figure 8-3  
Groundwater Subbasins



Several projects have been realized by the SJREC as a result of implementing groundwater sustainability for the basin. One of them is the Los Banos Creek Recharge and Recovery Project, which provides 7,000 acre-feet of water supply to the SJREC during what is termed a “critical year” under the San Joaquin River Exchange Contract. This project also provided water quality benefits to Los Banos through a 2017 water recharge of Los Banos Creek. One of Los Banos’ supply wells is near the creek and experienced a reduction in hexavalent chromium as a result of the recharge of higher-quality water from the project. Domestic well users in the area also experienced improvements to their water quality.

In addition to the GSP, the Los Banos Public Works Department has a Water Conservation Program, established in 1999, to conserve water supply and reduce wastewater. In addition, the Water Shortage Contingency Plan sets limits on watering of lawns to specific days of the week depending on drought conditions. In addition, the City performs water audits on high consumption accounts that are flagged during the billing process. It implements other Demand Management Measures (DMMs), including conservation pricing, water survey programs for residential commercial, and industrial users, and educating the public on water conservation.

### ***Storm Drainage and Green Infrastructure***

The existing storm drainage system of Los Banos collects, conveys, and discharges surface water runoff throughout the city into canals operated and maintained by the GWD or CCID. Most storm runoff is first captured in storm detention basins and later discharged through water conveyance systems, although a few existing neighborhoods directly discharge to canals. The existing storm drainage system is composed of neighborhood collection systems, detention basins, pump stations, and large-diameter storm drains.

Major water features within the Planning Area include the Los Banos Creek, Mud Slough, and drainage ditch facilities shared with CCID and GWD. These ditches include the GWD San Luis Canal, the GWD Santa Fe Canal, and the CCID Main Canal.

The City has a Storm Drainage Master Plan that recommends various improvements related to disposal of drain water, including standards for detention basins and proposed pump stations. The locations of these pump stations are illustrated in Figure 8-4. The City promotes the use of green infrastructure, which allows surface water to discharge into the ground and alleviate load on the stormwater drainage system by reducing stormwater flow. Some types of green infrastructure include green spaces, bioswales, rain gardens, planter boxes, trees, permeable pavements, collection basins, and stormwater recapture. Green infrastructure may also include improvements and restoration of existing land and features, such as expanding parks, greening public land and schoolyards, or creek and wetland restoration.



These green spaces are also tools for improving climate resilience and preserving biodiversity. Green infrastructure improvements can be implemented by public improvement projects as well as incorporated into private development projects.

Refer to Chapter 6, Parks, Open Space, and Conservation, for information and policies related to water quality, and Chapter 7, Safety and Noise, for policies related to flooding and stormwater management.

### ***Wastewater Collection and Disposal***

The City provides wastewater collection and treatment service to residents, businesses, and other institutions within the city limits. Wastewater is collected throughout the city via a network of sanitary sewer collection pipelines ranging from 4 to 30 inches in diameter. The City operates sewer lift stations to help pump the influent into the City's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) in the northeastern area of the city.

The City has a Wastewater Collection System Master Plan that provides an overview of the wastewater collection system, evaluates system capacity and demand, assesses future needs, and identifies capital improvement projects (CIPs) to meet wastewater needs for Los Banos. CIPs are primarily implemented by the Public Works Department (PWD). Wastewater flow to the WWTP is also reduced with the implementation of the Storm Drainage System Master Plan.

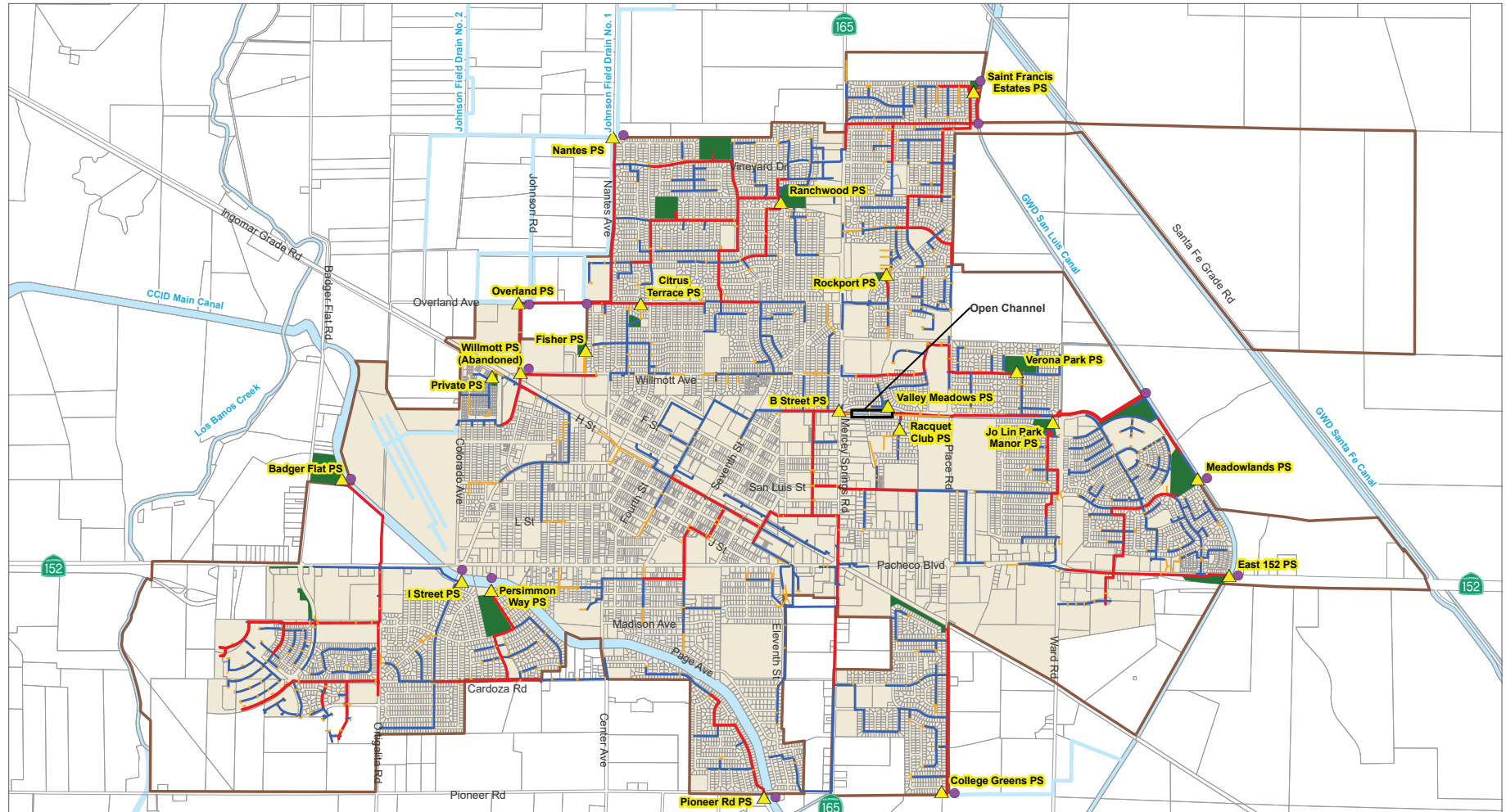
Treated water at the City's WWTP is discharged to wastewater treatment ponds and a portion of the treated effluent is applied as irrigation water on pastureland adjacent to the facility. The City assesses if existing capacity is sufficient and evaluates the expansion of additional irrigation areas for wastewater disposal as part of future improvements. Figure 8-5 maps the wastewater collection system of Los Banos.

### **Solid Waste Management and Recycling**

The City contracts with a private vendor for the collection of solid waste, green waste, and recyclable materials. The City's solid waste is taken to landfills operated by the Merced County Regional Waste Management Authority (MCRWMA), the solid waste management division of the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG). All of the solid waste from Los Banos is currently transported to Billy Wright Landfill, a Class III facility, on the west side of the county, which has capacity to accept waste until 2050.

The California Waste Management Act mandates local jurisdictions achieve a minimum 50-percent diversion rate annually. Diversion is the reduction of waste going to landfills. The MCRWMA works towards this goal by implementing programs through the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan. The MCRWMA provides annual reports to CalRecycle of waste diversion data for evaluation of how well it is achieving this goal. The Los Banos PWD is responsible for implementing programs in the city to help achieve this goal, such as green waste collection and recycling.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES ELEMENT



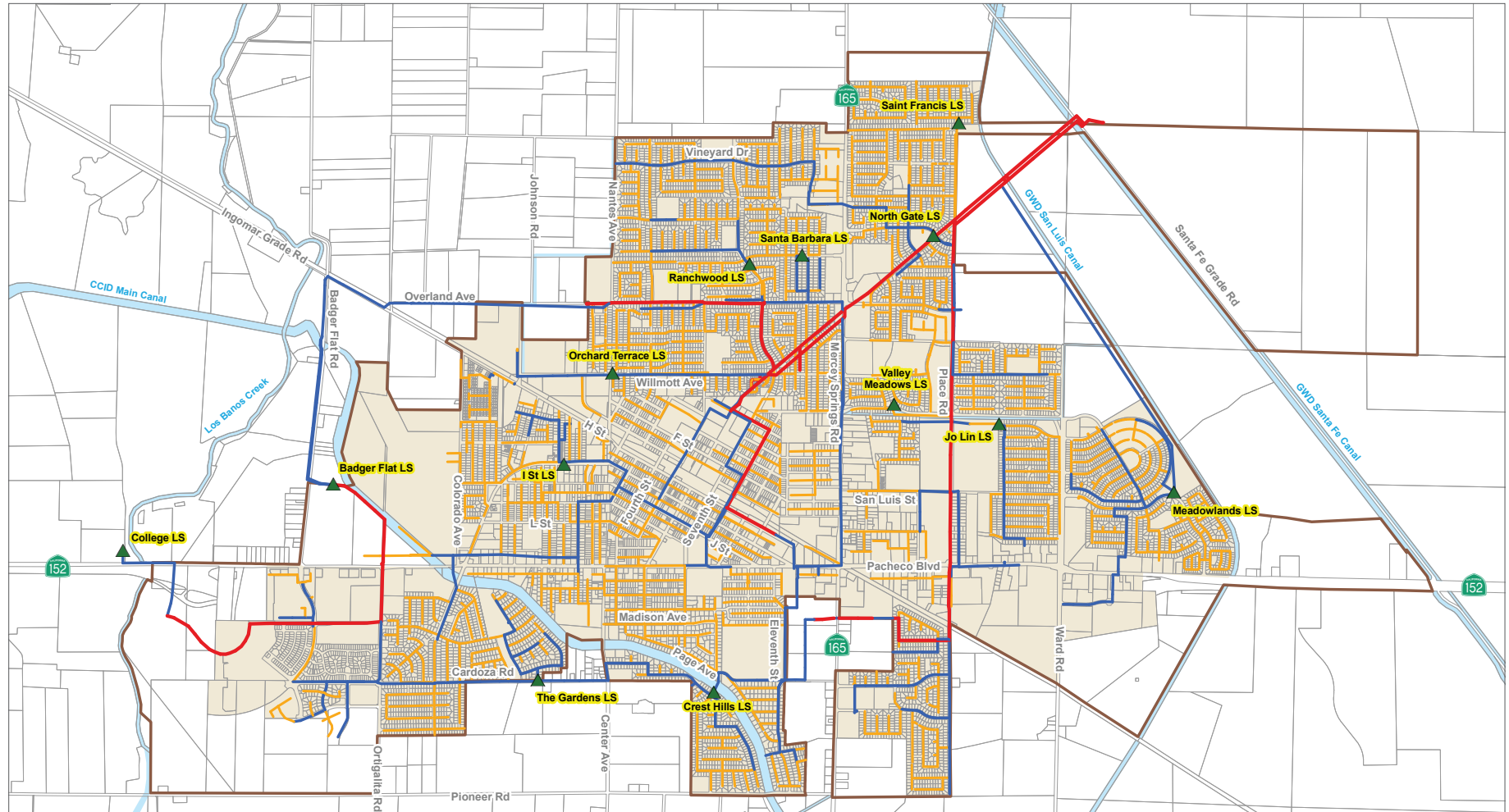
Source: Master Plan for Storm Drainage System, March 2010. Carollo Engineers, 2010.



<b>Legend</b>	<b>Storm Drain Diameter</b>	Waterways/Canals	Current Storm Drainage Service Area
<b>Existing Storm Drainage System</b>	12" and Smaller	Storm Basins	Parcels
Outfall	14" - 24"	City Limits	
Pump Station	27" and Larger		

Figure 8-4  
Stormwater System

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES ELEMENT



Source: Master Plan for Wastewater Collection System, March 2010. Carollo Engineers, 2010.



<b>Legend</b>	<b>Sewer Pipeline Diameter</b>	Current Wastewater Collection Service Area
<b>Existing Wastewater Collection System</b>	8" and Smaller	Parcels
Lift Station	10 - 18"	Waterways/Canals
	21" and Larger	City Limits

Figure 8-5  
Wastewater Collection System



## Energy

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is one service provider to the Los Banos Planning Area and maintains a system of underground and overhead lines to supply electricity to the city. PG&E is a public utility and therefore functions on demand. PG&E also provides natural gas via plastic and steel underground lines to city residents.

In addition, Los Banos offers local clean energy supply options for residents, businesses, and City operations. Los Banos is a member of the Peninsula Clean Energy network, a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) agency. The primary clean energy source is the Wright Solar Project just outside the city's boundaries. As part of the CCA, Los Banos homes and businesses will have the option to choose where their power comes from and have the opportunity to benefit from community programs, including increased access to funding, that will support energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for their homes and businesses.

### ***Renewable Energy***

Renewable energy sources provide clean energy for a city, as opposed to fossil-fuel based energies, which generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Renewable energy technologies are continuously evolving, but current, common technologies include wind, solar photovoltaics (PV), and geothermal wells. Transition to cleaner energy sources will help Los Banos reduce GHG emissions citywide and improve

resiliency against climate change-related impacts in the near future.

Renewable and clean energy projects can include “utility-scale” projects, larger stand-alone projects that connect to the main power grid to distribute and sell energy, or on-site projects, which serve only the facilities on the site where the project is installed, such as rooftop solar on a home or business.

### ***Energy Efficiency and Emissions Reductions***

Energy is used by buildings, vehicles, equipment, and infrastructure. Reducing energy use and fuel use can help the City meet its goals of reducing GHG emissions locally. Promoting development patterns that would reduce how much and how far people have to drive is one way to direct growth in an energy-efficient manner and thereby reduce fuel use and GHG emissions. Implementing green building strategies and infrastructure through policies and programs within cities and counties help ensure reduction of energy consumption for both existing and new development. The State of California created the Green Building Code (CALGreen) requiring buildings to be energy efficient through design. Cities and counties can also enact local policies to enhance energy efficiency within design, including mandating the use of low-emissions equipment.



## Environmental Justice

Senate Bill (SB) 1000 requires local jurisdictions to “promote public facilities” as part of incorporating environmental justice into general plans. Achieving this would require goals, policies, and actions that concern multiple city departments, including the Community and Economic Department and the PWD. Such policies would ensure an overall balance and equitable distribution of public facilities and amenities throughout the city.

Inequitable access to public facilities typically results from communities and neighborhoods lacking safe and adequate access to schools and community facilities, being underserved by public utilities, and receiving services and resources at a lower-quality and/or in less-safe conditions than would be standard and safe for the rest of the city. The characteristics and demographic makeup of the communities having inequitable access to public facilities and services are also a factor in determining the severity of inequity.

Areas that are underserved by public facilities and services may explore alternative solutions for meeting its facility and utility needs. For example, disadvantaged communities (DACs) that are inadequately served by the storm drainage system could benefit greatly from implementation of green infrastructure, which would help discharge surface water runoff, reduce the risk of flooding, and reduce heat island effects through more greening.

Tools that identify disadvantaged communities (DACs), such as CalEnviroScreen, already use methodology to make this determination. In addition to screening for DACs through CalEnviroScreen, Los Banos may conduct further analysis and assessments to more accurately understand how DACs within the Planning Area experience inequality and issues related to public facilities and services. Environmental justice goals, policies, and actions would then be developed to address the issues identified.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### *Schools and Community Facilities*

#### **GOAL PFS-1**

**Help create jobs and improve job quality for existing and future Los Banos residents.**

#### **POLICIES**

- Policy PFS-P1.1 Ensure adequate elementary school sites are reserved in new subdivisions, consistent with the Land Use Diagram and state law.
- Policy PFS-P1.2 Require that elementary schools be located close to residential neighborhoods, and away from major streets to avoid vehicular traffic and noise.



Policy PFS-P1.3 Maintain a close, collaborative relationship with Los Banos Unified School District on all matters of mutual interest.

**GOAL  
PFS-2**

**Provide public and cultural facilities that contribute to Los Banos' positive image, enhance community identity, and meet the civic and social needs of residents.**

**POLICIES**

Policy PFS-P2.1 Locate new Community Centers in mixed-use Neighborhood Centers, Downtown, or in parks, and offer incentives for developers who set aside land for the development of Community Centers.

Policy PFS-P2.2 Support the development of a range of cultural and arts facilities, such as museums, performing art centers, and art exhibition spaces throughout the city.

Policy PFS-P2.3 Require new development to pay its fair share of the costs of expanding library services to maintain current service levels.

Policy PFS-P2.4 Work with healthcare providers to maintain a full range of healthcare facilities and services designed to meet regional and community needs.

Policy PFS-P2.5 Facilitate the provision of safe, affordable, and quality elder care facilities, childcare services, and transitional housing for families who reside or work in Los Banos.

Policy PFS-P2.6 Ensure accessibility for disabled persons to all buildings offering health and social services, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Policy PFS-P2.7 Encourage internet providers to improve access to reliable, fast, affordable internet in Los Banos.

**ACTIONS**

*Action PFS-A2.1* Work with the Los Banos Branch of the Merced County Library to create either a new large library facility or several satellite branches to serve additional population in Los Banos.

*Action PFS-A2.2* Explore the feasibility of participating in the Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Centers for Vulnerable Populations Incentive Pilot Program administered by the State of California to retrofit ventilation systems of public facilities to serve as clean air centers during wildfires and other smoke events.

### ***Water, Stormwater, and Wastewater***

#### **GOAL PFS-3**

**Ensure a resilient supply of fresh, safe water to serve existing and future needs of the city.**

#### **POLICIES**

- Policy PFS-P3.1 Promote the conservation of water within Los Banos.
- Policy PFS-P3.2 Ensure adequate groundwater reserves are maintained for present and future domestic, commercial, and industrial uses.
- Policy PFS-P3.3 Require new development to document that water supply capacity, quality, and infrastructure are in place prior to approval of new development.

Policy PFS-P3.4 Prohibit extension of water and sewer lines beyond the sphere of influence, except in cases of developing regional water and sewer facilities or of existing documented health hazards and in areas where the City has agreements to provide services.

Policy PFS-P3.5 Continue to pursue the identification and acquisition of surface water rights or supply agreements to meet future regional water supply needs.

Policy PFS-P3.6 Attempt to retain water rights in all annexed areas so that agricultural production can continue on annexed land until the time of development. These rights will then be made available to meet urban water demands, or where feasible, be exchanged for groundwater recharge opportunities as part of a comprehensive water recharge program.

Policy PFS-P3.7 Require all development projects to submit a landscaping plan.



- Commercial, public right-of-way, and park projects will be required to submit planting plans, irrigation plans, irrigation schedules, and water use estimates for City approval prior to issuance of building permits;
- Industrial projects will be required to submit plans for water recycling and explain how water use will meet requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program during the plan review process. They will also be required to submit irrigation plans for proposed landscaping.

Policy PFS-P3.8 Develop water filtration facilities to ensure the quality of groundwater meets federal and state drinking water standards. The City may place a temporary cap on urban development, if necessary, to allow facilities to catch up with growth.

Policy PFS-P3.9 Promote the use of evapotranspiration (ET) water systems in irrigating agriculture and large parks.

Policy PFS-P3.10 Educate the general public about the importance of water conservation, water recycling, and groundwater recharge through the following means:

- Making water production and treatment facilities available for tours by schools or organized groups;
- Encouraging educators to include water conservation in their curriculums; and
- Providing tips to business groups on water conservation and recycling.

## ACTIONS

*Action PFS-A3.1* Regularly review and update impact mitigation fees to help fund water and sewage services for new development.

*Action PFS-A3.2* Become a signatory to the California Urban Water Conservation Council and implement all Demand Management Measures as soon as they become feasible.



# 8 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

*Action PFS-A3.3* Implement recommendations set forth in the City’s current Urban Water Management Plan, including initiatives such as:

- A water survey program;
- A water conservation program (Water Patrol); and
- A Residential Plumbing retrofit program.

*Action PFS-A3.4* Engage the business community in protecting the City’s water supply.

## GOAL PFS-4

**Achieve a sustainable stormwater drainage system that meets the existing and future needs of the city.**

## POLICIES

Policy PFS-P4.1 Require green infrastructure improvements in new private developments.

Policy PFS-P4.2 Where possible, incorporate green infrastructure improvements in public improvement projects by the City.

## ACTION

*Action PFS-A4.1* Create an incentive program to promote improvement of existing residential, commercial, and industrial developments and structures with green infrastructure improvements.

## GOAL PFS-5

**Ensure that adequate, safe wastewater treatment capacity is available to serve existing and future needs of the city.**

## POLICIES

Policy PFS-P5.1 Design stormwater and wastewater collection and treatment facilities to serve expected buildout of the areas served by these facilities.

Policy PFS-P5.2 In partnership with county, state, and federal agencies, work to prevent illegal wastewater disposal or chemical disposal practices.

Policy PFS-P5.3 Encourage the use of reclaimed water for irrigation and landscaping purposes.



## ACTIONS

*Action PFS-A5.1* Implement recommendations put forth by the City's current Wastewater Management Plan with regards to:

- The future expansion of existing treatment facilities beyond 4.9 million gallons per day (mgd), and/or the construction of a new membrane bi-reactor (MBR) facility to meet projected population growth; and
- The acquisition of land for treatment purposes.

*Action PFS-A5.2* Study the feasibility of expanding the use of wastewater effluent for irrigation of pasturelands.

*Action PFS-A5.3* Evaluate the potential for the use of reclaimed water (purple pipe) throughout the city.

## Solid Waste

### GOAL PFS-6

Ensure adequate and sustainable solid waste management that meets the existing and future needs of the city and strives to reduce disposable waste over time.

## POLICIES

Policy PFS-P6.1 Reduce volumes of solid waste generated in Los Banos through recycling and resource conservation measures, such as:

- Requiring new and refurbished buildings be designed with on-site storage facilities for recycled materials to make recycling more convenient;
- Using post-consumer recycled paper and other recycled materials in all City operations;
- Supporting the commingled-recycling program; and

- Continuing efforts to develop new specialized recycling programs for residential, commercial, industrial, and educational sectors.

Policy PFS-P6.2 Support waste reduction and recycling programs through public education, including writing articles on City websites, newsletters, and other forms of publications.

Policy PFS-P6.3 Work closely with the Merced County Regional Waste Management Authority to ensure adequate landfill space is available to meet projected growth.

### ACTION

*Action PFS-A6.1* Assess the capacity of Billy Wright Landfill and prioritize planning for an early expansion of Billy Wright Landfill or identifying an alternative landfill space.

### Energy

#### GOAL PFS-7

Promote and increase access to renewable energy.

#### POLICIES

Policy PFS-P7.1 Establish policies and programs that facilitate and remove barriers towards the siting of new renewable energy generation for the benefit of Los Banos' residents, businesses, and City operations.

Policy PFS-P7.2 Pursue and provide economic incentives and creative financing for renewable energy projects, as well as other support for community members or developers seeking funding for such projects.

Policy PFS-P7.3 Promote, support, and require, as appropriate and to the extent feasible and consistent with state laws, the development of on-site renewable energy projects for residents and businesses to develop on their properties.



Policy PFS-P7.4 Promote distributed generation projects. “Distributed generation” refers to small-scale renewable energy projects that can be installed on buildings in a community. Programs such as the Multifamily Affordable Solar Roofs Program at the California Public Utilities Commission create funding sources specifically for small-scale solar installations in disadvantaged communities.

Policy PFS-P7.5 Pursue opportunities to require or encourage on-site energy storage, such as on-site batteries, within facilities and developments.

**ACTIONS**

*Action PFS-A7.1* Develop an economic incentives financing program to support renewable energy projects.

*Action PFS-A7.2* Conduct a community land and resources audit that assesses current land uses, characteristics, and zoning designations to find areas best suited to primary use solar development; identifies needed zoning code changes; and creates siting standards that minimize impacts on sensitive resources.

**Environmental Justice**

**GOAL  
PFS-8**

Ensure equitable distribution and quality of public facilities, infrastructure, and services throughout Los Banos so that the fundamental needs of all residents are met and all residents can access the services they need

**POLICIES**

Policy PFS-P8.1 Maintain and improve access to transit stops and stations for mobility-challenged population groups such as youth, people with disabilities, and seniors.

Policy PFS-P8.2 Prioritize investments in public facilities, infrastructure, and services that benefit disadvantaged communities and respond to the needs identified by residents in those communities.

Policy PFS-P8.3 Assist disadvantaged communities in establishing funding and financing mechanisms, including City-initiated mechanisms like landscape and lighting improvement districts, to provide community-desired public facilities and services.



## ACTIONS

- Action PFS-A8.1* Prioritize needs and services in disadvantaged communities as part of the annual budgeting process.
- Action PFS-A8.2* Compile, maintain, and make easily available a list of numbers to call for basic needs, such as code enforcement, housing assistance, food assistance, and healthcare. Provide this information in multiple languages.
- Action PFS-A8.3* Explore the feasibility of participating in the Green Infrastructure Program administered by the State of California Natural Resources Agency to implement green infrastructure projects.

## GOAL PFS-9

**Ensure equitable and convenient access to health services throughout Los Banos so that all residents can find the physical and behavioral healthcare services they need within their community.**

## POLICIES

- Policy PFS-P9.1 Work with community-based organizations to expand community health-related outreach, analysis, and implementation.
- Policy PFS-P9.2 Collaborate with non-profit partners to attract medical clinics, behavioral health facilities, and pharmacies in areas that lack access to healthcare.



This page intentionally left blank.

# 9 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

*The General Plan provides specific policy guidance for implementation of plan concepts in each of the Plan elements. This framework establishes a basis for coordinated action by the City, adjacent jurisdictions, Merced County, and regional agencies. This chapter describes the process in general terms and the major actions to be undertaken by the City; the implementing policies in each element of the Plan provide details that will guide program development.*

## Contents

- 1 Responsibilities
- 2 The Regulatory System
- 3 Capital Improvements Programming
- 4 Implementation Actions for Plan Policies

The major implementation process for the land use proposals will be administration of the Zoning Ordinance through the Zoning Map. The Zoning Ordinance will need to be amended to be consistent with the General Plan's policies. The Subdivision Ordinance also should be amended to add additional requirements for land dedication for schools and parks, to provide flexibility in street design, and ensure adequate provision of bike and pedestrian facilities and connections between neighborhoods, schools, and parks, consistent with Plan policies.

The Capital Improvement Program will be the primary means of scheduling and funding infrastructure improvements of city-wide benefit. Based on the recommendations made in the General Plan, a new Impact Fee analysis will be required to determine the level of impact fees to be charged to developers. Special assessment districts or other means of financing improvements benefiting specific areas, such as for Downtown, the Airport Site, and the Business Opportunity Area also may be used.

In many areas, General Plan implementation will depend on actions of other public agencies and of the private sector, which will fund most of the development expected to occur in the Planning Area. The General Plan will serve a coordinating function for private-sector decisions; it also provides a basis for City action on individual subdivision and development applications, which must be found to be consistent with the General Plan if they are to be approved.

## **Responsibilities**

Implementing the General Plan will involve the City Council, the Planning Commission, other City boards and commissions, and City departments. The City also will need to consult with Merced County and other public agencies about implementation proposals that affect their respective areas of jurisdiction. The principal responsibilities that City officials and staff have for General Plan implementation are briefly summarized herein; details on their powers and duties are in the Los Banos Municipal Code.

### ***City Council***

The City Council is responsible for the overall management of municipal affairs; it acts as the legislative body and is responsible for adoption of the General Plan and any amendments to the General Plan. The City Council appoints the City Manager who is the chief administrator of the City and has overall responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the Plan. The City Council also appoints other boards and commissions established under the Municipal Code.

The City Council's role in implementing the General Plan will be to set implementation priorities and approve zoning map and text amendments, consistent with the General Plan, and a Capital Improvement Program and budget to carry out the Plan.

### ***Planning Commission***

The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and recommending adoption or amendment of the General Plan, Zoning, and Subdivision ordinances and other regulations, resources conservation plans, and programs and legislation needed to implement the General Plan. The Planning Commission also may prepare and recommend adoption of specific plans, neighborhood plans, or special plans, as needed for General Plan implementation.

### ***Community and Economic Development Department***

The Community and Economic Development Department is responsible for the general planning and development review functions undertaken by the City. Specific duties related to General Plan implementation include preparing ordinance amendments, design guidelines, reviewing development applications, conducting investigations, and making reports and recommendations on planning and land use, zoning, subdivisions, development plans, and environmental controls. The department will also coordinate activities with the Los Banos Unified School District related to school sites and the Los Banos Municipal Airport in consultation with Merced County and the Airport Land Use Commission. Finally, the Community and Economic Development Department will have the primary responsibility for preparing the annual report on the General Plan and conducting the five-year review. These reporting requirements are described in Chapter 1 of the General Plan.



The Community and Economic Development Department will be responsible for actions pertaining to marketing, industrial targeting, workforce preparedness, improving Los Banos' business climate, and other actions highlighted in Chapter 2, Economic Development Element, of the General Plan.

### ***Public Works Department***

The Public Works Department provides engineering and maintenance services.

- **The Public Works Engineering Services Department** is responsible for the review of subdivision maps, grading permits, public improvement plans, encroachment permits, development in the flood zone, and sewer permits. It also does construction inspection for permits it issues and is responsible for the design and construction of capital improvement projects.
- **The Public Works Maintenance Services Department** is responsible for transportation planning and operations, signing, striping and street maintenance, infrastructure maintenance, and parks and facilities maintenance. Specific implementing responsibilities are established in the Land Use, Circulation, and Public Facilities and Services Elements of the General Plan.

### ***Parks and Facilities Division***

The Parks and Facilities Division of the Public Works Department is responsible for managing the City's recreation services, its parks and open spaces, and various facilities such as sports complexes. Specific implementing responsibilities are established in the Parks, Open Space, and Conservation Element of the General Plan. The division is also charged with the task of maintaining and improving all City-owned street trees, park trees, and all other trees considered to be publicly owned.

### ***Police and Fire Departments***

Within the city, responsibility for public safety is assigned to the Police and Fire Departments. The Police Department is responsible for preventing crime and maintaining law and order, while the Fire Department is responsible for fighting urban and wildland fires as well as emergency response and rescue. Both departments also coordinate with the County on mutual aid. Specific implementing responsibilities under the General Plan are established in the Safety and Noise Element of the General Plan.

### ***Other Boards and Commissions***

The City Council is assisted by the following three citizen commissions and one committee:

- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Airport Advisory Commission
- Traffic Safety Committee



The General Plan does not envision any substantive change in the responsibilities assigned to these boards and commissions. They will be administering new or amended regulations adopted pursuant to General Plan policies and their actions will need to be consistent with the General Plan.

## The Regulatory System

The City will use a variety of regulatory mechanisms and administrative procedures to implement the General Plan. Overall responsibility for plan implementation is vested in the Planning Agency, consisting of the City Council, Planning Commission, and the Community and Economic Development Director. Under California Law, Los Banos is required to have the Zoning Ordinance be consistent with the General Plan; moreover, establishing and maintaining consistency is good planning policy and is called for in the General Plan. In fact, the consistency requirement is the keystone of General Plan implementation. Without a consistency requirement, there is no assurance that General Plan policies will be implemented and that environmental resources earmarked for protection in the plan will be preserved. Other regulatory mechanisms, including subdivision approvals, building and housing codes, capital improvement programs, and environmental review procedures also will be used to implement plan policies. All project approvals must be found consistent with the General Plan.

## Zoning Regulations

The City's Zoning Ordinance will translate plan policies into specific use regulations, development standards, and performance criteria that will govern development on individual properties. The General Plan establishes the policy framework, while the Zoning Ordinance prescribes standards, rules, and procedures for development. The Zoning Map will provide more detail than the General Plan Land Use Diagram.

The General Plan calls for several new zoning districts. Regulations for these districts will be established as part of the comprehensive zoning update currently being undertaken. The use regulations and development standards for existing zoning districts will need to be amended to conform to General Plan policies. Density and intensity limits, consistent with the plan's land use classifications, also should be established. For purposes of evaluating General Plan consistency, the density of proposed projects will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole number, as appropriate.

The City will bring both the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map into conformity with the General Plan. When the General Plan is subsequently amended, the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map also may need to be amended to maintain consistency between the plan and zoning.

# 9 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

## ***Subdivision Regulations***

No subdivision of land may be approved under California law and the City’s subdivision regulations unless its design and proposed improvements are found to be consistent with the General Plan. Dedication of land for park facilities is required for subdivisions above a certain size, consistent with the policies and standards prescribed by the General Plan. The precise threshold will be established on a case-by-case basis and depends on whether there are neighborhood parks in the vicinity that can serve new residents. The subdivision regulations also can require dedication of land for riparian habitat and reservation of land for fire stations, libraries, bike paths, transit facilities, and other public facilities.

After adoption of the General Plan, the City’s subdivision regulations will need to be amended to conform to plan policies and explicitly require findings of consistency with the General Plan as a condition of approving major and minor subdivisions. Reservation requirements for bus turnout facilities and bike and pedestrian facilities also will need to be added to carry out plan policies. The Subdivision Ordinance should require connection between new streets and existing streets, wherever possible, and allow for reduced, right-of-way dimensions to maintain neighborhood character. Consideration of passive solar energy techniques in street and lot layout and landscaping will also be required and the ordinance may require access easements in new subdivisions.

## ***Building and Housing Codes***

No building permit may be issued under California law (Government Code Section 65567), unless the proposed development is consistent with the City’s open space plan and conforms to the policies of the Parks, Open Space, and Conservation Element. To provide an administrative mechanism to ensure consistency, it may be appropriate to require applicants for building permits and grading permits to secure a “zoning certificate” or other form of zoning clearance before these permits can be issued.

## ***Consistency Between the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance***

Los Banos will implement many General Plan policies through the City’s Zoning Ordinance. Zoning must be consistent with the General Plan if the City’s land use, housing, and open space policies are to be realized. A fundamental link between the General Plan and zoning is land use/zoning consistency. Table 9-1 shows how zoning districts in Los Banos are consistent with the land use designations of this General Plan.



**Table 9-1: Consistency Between the General Plan and Zoning**

General Plan Land Use Designations	Consistent Zoning District
Low Density Residential	R-1
Medium Density Residential	R-2
High Density Residential	R-3
Downtown Mixed Use	M-X, R-C, H-C
Neighborhood Commercial	C-N
Commercial	C-1, H-C
Office/Professional	P-O
Employment Park	*EP, P-O, L-I, H-C
Industrial	I, L-I
Agriculture/Rural	*AG
Parks	PARK
Civil/Institutional	P-F

\* Zoning district would need to be created.

- Acquisition of land for public purposes
- Disposition of land
- Street vacations
- Authorization or construction of public buildings or structures

The Planning Agency has 40 days to comment on such actions, and under state law, these recommendations are advisory only; the City Council may make its own determinations of consistency. The Planning Agency also has the right to comment on CIPs prepared by Los Banos Unified School District and utility providers. These CIPs, and any annual revision proposed to them, are to be forwarded to the Planning Commission at least 60 days prior to adoption for the Commission’s review for consistency with the General Plan.

**Capital Improvements Programming**

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes a list of public works projects that the City intends to design and construct in coming years. Under California law, the Planning Agency has responsibility for reviewing the CIP to determine whether it conforms to the General Plan. Specifically, the Government Code requires the Planning Agency to review for conformity with the General Plan CIP projects requiring any of the following actions:



## Implementation Actions for Plan Policies

Tables 9-2 through 9-7 on the following pages summarize implementation actions that the City will undertake to carry out the policies proposed in each element of the General Plan.

**TABLE 9-2: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>ED-A1.1</b>	<p>Actively promote Los Banos as a good place for business through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to attend trade shows, retail conventions, or other gatherings for targeted industries;</li> <li>• Regularly schedule face-to-face meetings between City representatives and leaders of key local businesses for business retention purposes;</li> <li>• Prepare effective and informative collateral materials to distribute to interested businesses;</li> <li>• Publish an inventory of assets that Los Banos offers in newsletters and on the web;</li> <li>• Create materials to keep businesses and industry groups informed of local services using electronic newsletter, postcards, and specialized promotional packages.</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	Chamber of Commerce
<b>ED-A1.2</b>	Create and market a unified and unique city image through a branding strategy that differentiates Los Banos from other communities in Merced County, the San Joaquin Valley, and California.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County
<b>ED-A2.1</b>	<p>Prepare an outreach strategy for targeted industries, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industries/businesses that indicate an interest in, and/or represent a good geographical fit with the San Joaquin Valley, Merced County, and/or Los Banos;</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	



**TABLE 9-2: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industries whose labor requirements match the occupations and skills of the local labor force and local educational institutions;</li> <li>Businesses that rely on ground and air transportation;</li> <li>Businesses that can add to or leverage existing industrial clusters or firms;</li> <li>Public or private enterprises appropriate to strengthening the health/education/services sector, or those that would improve the quality of life for residents and help to attract higher-income households to Los Banos; and</li> <li>Partnerships with area educational institutions to assist with training for a new workforce.</li> </ul>		
<b>ED-A2.2</b>	Continue to have economic development staff contact and visit target companies and industry associations, including businesses, real estate brokers, and site consultants.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A2.3</b>	In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the Merced County Economic Development Team, continuously track local, state, and national economic trends to identify new candidate businesses/industries for Los Banos.	Community & Economic Development	Chamber of Commerce, Merced County Community and Economic Development
<b>ED-A2.4</b>	Encourage the establishment and expansion of value-added food processing businesses in Los Banos that use local agricultural products.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A2.5</b>	Explore including the warehousing and logistics industry as a recruitment target, including, but not limited to, research into the benefits and barriers to development of major warehouse and distribution centers similar in Patterson and Tracy.	Community & Economic Development	

**TABLE 9-2: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>ED-A2.6</b>	Explore possible expansion of the existing medical center, including location, facility size, infrastructure needs, and service capacity, etc.	Community & Economic Development	Sutter Health and/or other healthcare providers
<b>ED-A2.7</b>	Continue to explore the possible relocation or closure of the Los Banos Airport with redevelopment of the site to potentially include regional recreation facilities, as well as retail, office, industrial, and residential uses.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County Federal Aviation Authority
<b>ED-A2.8</b>	Continue to explore establishment of a business park that would provide shovel-ready land, as well as speculative and built-to-suit office and industrial buildings, with ready access to high-capacity utilities (i.e., water, sewer, electrical, broadband) and transportation infrastructure.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A2.9</b>	<p>Establish Los Banos as a tourism destination by promoting activities associated with the O'Neil Forebay, Grassland Ecological Area, and other points of interest around the city. Specific initiatives may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting commerce associated with the O'Neil Forebay as a summer recreation area, and the Tule Elk Reserve for wildlife viewing;</li> <li>• Promoting commerce associated with private recreational activities within the Grassland Ecological Area, such as wildlife viewing and hunting;</li> <li>• Establishing easy access to visitor information, such as lodging, dining, recreation, and cultural offerings in the city and surrounding area; and</li> <li>• Providing clear signage on roads leading to points of interest.</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	Grassland Water District



**TABLE 9-2: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>ED-A2.10</b>	Investigate the benefits that senior communities may bring to Los Banos and, if appropriate, pursue development of such communities in appropriate locations.	Community & Economic Development	Merced Housing Authority
<b>ED-A2.11</b>	Promote youth-related businesses and those that provide activities families can enjoy together.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A2.12</b>	Explore the feasibility of creating an Auto Mall at the eastern or western end of Pacheco Boulevard, near the State Route 152 bypass intersections.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A3.1</b>	Actively recruit vocational institutions to locate in Los Banos, and support development of a vocational education certificate program at Merced Community College that can address the gaps for technical skills needed by the city's major industries.	Community & Economic Development	Merced College
<b>ED-A3.2</b>	Actively recruit University of California Merced staff and students to network with Los Banos for research and development, pilot, or training opportunities.	Community & Economic Development	University of California Merced
<b>ED-A3.3</b>	Work with high schools, the Community College, University of California Merced, other educational providers, and major employers to develop internship, mentoring, and apprenticeship programs.	Community & Economic Development	Merced College University of California Merced Los Banos Unified School District



**TABLE 9-2: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>ED-A4.1</b>	<p>Improve the ease of doing business within the City to ensure the growth, development, and prosperity of Los Banos’ business community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to maintain an inventory of “shovel-ready” sites, with information about their location, size, configuration, infrastructure availability, zoning, and other data that indicates readiness for development;</li> <li>Continuing to provide business assistance services, including visitation to existing businesses;</li> <li>Adopting a streamlined permit process and expediting permit decisions; and</li> <li>Creating a one-stop web portal for economic development.</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A4.2</b>	Establish financing plans for existing businesses seeking to expand in Los Banos for whom payment of fees “upfront” may represent a major financial burden.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A4.3</b>	Develop an incubator program to foster the development of local start-ups.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A4.4</b>	Establish a “Citizens’ Academy” to educate the public and businesses regarding the role of government in providing high-quality, but fiscally efficient, public services.	City Manager’s Office	
<b>ED-A5.1</b>	In partnership with the Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown store owners, and local hotels, promote a varied seasonal calendar of parades, festivals, celebrations, promotional sales, and sporting events in Downtown that will draw visitors to the area.	Community & Economic Development	Downtown Association Chamber of Commerce



**TABLE 9-2: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>ED-A5.2</b>	Encourage establishment of both temporary and permanent cultural attractions and entertainment venues within the Downtown to help establish it as a local destination.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>ED-A5.3</b>	Explore establishing an entertainment district in the Downtown with a discrete boundary and strategies to promote entertainment uses, such as: (New Action) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing permit requirements;</li> <li>• Providing incentives for pubs and restaurants;</li> <li>• Allowing for reduced or shared parking; and</li> <li>• Delineating an area in which to facilitate food trucks and pop-up businesses.</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	Downtown Association Chamber of Commerce
<b>ED-A6.1</b>	Continue to work with regional economic development organizations to foster the economic health of the area.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County Community and Economic Development
<b>ED-A6.2</b>	Continue to periodically survey the business community for evaluation of City services and improvement suggestions.	Community & Economic Development	Chamber of Commerce
<b>ED-A7.1</b>	Continue to identify, pursue, and secure funding from available local, state, and federal sources for economic development.	Community & Economic Development	

**TABLE 9-3: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR LAND USE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>LU-A1.1</b>	Seek Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) approval of a sphere of influence (SOI) line corresponding with the General Plan designation for the proposed SOI.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County LAFCO
<b>LU-A1.2</b>	Review and update Title 9 of the City Municipal Code (Planning and Zoning) and Zoning Map, as necessary, to ensure consistency with the General Plan.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A1.3</b>	Adopt a Growth Management Program to monitor growth and ensure that provision of public facilities and utilities are aligned with development and track the amount of growth relative to what was analyzed in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A1.4</b>	Regularly evaluate and implement adjustments to the City's fee structure to encourage development in areas where infrastructure is already present and ensure that non-infill development pays its fair share of anticipated citywide capital facilities and operational costs.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>LU-A1.5</b>	Provide comments to Merced County on proposed significant development projects within the Planning Area to request consistency with this General Plan and other City regulations.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County
<b>LU-A1.6</b>	Participate in the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) regional planning programs and coordinate City plans and programs with those of MCAG, including the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, and work with non-profit organizations also engaging in these planning programs.	Community & Economic Development	



**TABLE 9-3: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR LAND USE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>LU-A1.7</b>	Coordinate with Merced Community College (Los Banos Campus) to ensure the development of roadways, utilities, and expansion of campus facilities, is consistent with City plans.	Community & Economic Development Public Works	Merced Community College
<b>LU-A2.1</b>	Periodically review the City’s development impact fees to determine whether they should be adjusted to reflect the City’s priorities for parks, community centers, and libraries that serve the surrounding neighborhoods.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>LU-A2.2</b>	Create fee structures that incentivize the creation of attached, small-lot, and small-floorplan size ownership housing units to provide opportunities for many families to participate in the home-ownership market.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A2.3</b>	Adopt ordinances that preserve affordable housing options while ensuring that housing meets habitability requirements and City codes.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A2.4</b>	Maintain appropriate density bonuses for developers meeting State criteria for affordable housing, and create an additional density bonus for projects undertaking elective off-site improvements (such as streetscape improvements) that further the City’s community design and/or open space objectives. This latter bonus cannot be combined with the affordable housing bonus. Off-site improvements directly resulting from a project’s impacts, as specified in the Zoning Ordinance, may still be required; the bonus is intended for improvements that go beyond the required minimum.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>LU-A2.5</b>	Continue to review development applications to confirm consistency with the adopted Community Design Standards.	Community & Economic Development	

**TABLE 9-3: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR LAND USE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>LU-A2.6</b>	Amend the Zoning Ordinance in Title 9 of the City Municipal Code to permit multifamily residential development at a density between 20 to 30 units per net acre on Regional Commercial lots of 40 acres or larger in size.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A4.1</b>	Adopt a dark sky ordinance, including lighting standards and enforcement provisions that reduce light pollution. In the interim, refer to guidelines from the International Dark Sky Association during the review of major projects involving night lighting.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>LU-A6.1</b>	Adopt flexible zoning and encourage a mix of residential, retail, and office in the heart of Downtown.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A6.2</b>	Establish zoning, review procedures, and fees that encourage rehabilitation, renovation, preservation, and reuse of Downtown buildings with a mix of commercial, entertainment, and residential uses that promote around-the-clock activity.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A6.3</b>	Target individual vacant and underutilized infill sites that are not part of larger neighborhood developments for additional high-density residential development.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A6.4</b>	Establish incentives for anchor retail to locate in strategic areas of Downtown to maximize foot traffic and interest	Community & Economic Development	Downtown Association
<b>LU-A6.5</b>	Amend Title 9 of the City Municipal Code (Planning and Zoning) to provide flexibility for redevelopment of historic structures in the Downtown to meet current needs while maintaining the overall historic value.	Community & Economic Development	California Office of Historic Preservation
<b>LU-A6.6</b>	Facilitate planning and permitting for building renovations to ensure they are economically feasible and enable new uses that meet contemporary needs	Community & Economic Development	





**TABLE 9-3: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR LAND USE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>LU-A6.7</b>	Work with other public agencies and organizations to develop and use all available financing tools and incentives to stimulate investment in the Downtown, including areas within the Rail Corridor Master Plan.	Community & Economic Development	Downtown Association
<b>LU-A6.8</b>	Evaluate and implement adjustments to the Public Facilities Fee structure to promote development in the Downtown.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>LU-A6.9</b>	Implement the policies and strategies contained in the Downtown Strategic Plan, including by amending Title 9 of the City Municipal Code (Planning and Zoning) and permitting procedures/fees, as necessary.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A6.10</b>	Explore the possibility of creating a commercial parking center to alleviate problems of on-street truck parking.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>LU-A6.11</b>	Improve Downtown lighting, potentially including installation of new streetlamps or suspended street lighting, and/or requirements for new development to incorporate pedestrian-scale lighting.	Public Works	Community & Economic Development
<b>LU-A6.12</b>	Improve Downtown wayfinding for vehicles and pedestrians to direct visitors to key destinations throughout the Downtown.	Public Works	Community & Economic Development
<b>LU-A6.13</b>	Improve sidewalk maintenance in the Downtown and explore widening key sidewalks to provide space for outdoor seating and tree plantings.	Public Works	Community & Economic Development
<b>LU-A6.14</b>	Implement complete streets projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety in the Downtown.	Public Works	Community & Economic Development

**TABLE 9-4: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR CIRCULATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>C-A1.1</b>	Work with the Merced County Association of Governments and Caltrans to implement technologies that can improve the performance, reliability, and safety of the transportation system, such as signal coordination, centralized traffic control, red-light and speed enforcement cameras, and real-time travel information.	Community & Economic Development	MCAG Caltrans
<b>C-A1.2</b>	Adopt street standards that provide flexibility in design, especially in residential neighborhoods. Revise right-of-way and pavement standards to reflect adjacent land use and/or anticipated traffic and permit reduced right-of-way dimensions where necessary to maintain neighborhood character.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A1.3</b>	Adopt updated street standards to reflect complete streets principles, focusing on bicycle and pedestrian safety and multi-modal uses.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A1.4</b>	Plan for a frontage road on the south side of the SR-152 bypass to facilitate traffic circulation.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A1.5</b>	Work with regional and state agencies to plan for the future SR-152 bypass.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>C-A1.6</b>	Establish landscaping standards along the SR-152 bypass and the Pioneer Road/Ward Road/West Connector.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A2.1</b>	Participate in regional efforts to develop guidelines for calculating the projected VMT associated with future development projects and transportation improvements. The guidelines also should cover administration, screening criteria, and appropriate Transportation Demand Management measures and monitoring procedures. All VMT metrics should be routinely reassessed and revised as needed to reflect changing conditions.	Community & Economic Development	MCAG Public Works



**TABLE 9-4: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR CIRCULATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>C-A2.2</b>	Study the feasibility of a Trip Reduction Ordinance (TRO) to support achievement of the State-mandated reductions in VMT.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A2.3</b>	Perform routine, ongoing evaluation of the efficiency of the urban street traffic-control system, with emphasis on traffic signal timing, phasing, and coordination to optimize traffic flow along arterial corridors. Use traffic control systems to balance arterial street utilization (e.g., timing and phasing for turn movements, peak period, and off-peak signal timing plans).	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A2.4</b>	Establish and implement additional programs to maintain adequate peak-hour level of service at intersections and along roadway segments as circumstances warrant.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A3.1</b>	Develop a multi-modal transit system map integrating bicycle, public transportation, pedestrian, and vehicle linkages within the city to ensure circulation gaps are being met.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A5.1</b>	Assess and address parking needs of downtown commercial businesses by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering the need for the construction of a new parking structure for public convenience and to promote economic development; and</li> <li>• Establishing parking exemptions for small stores and restaurants.</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	
<b>C-A5.2</b>	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow shared parking for mixed uses where peak parking demands do not overlap.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>C-A6.1</b>	Study the feasibility of relocating the airport outside the urban area, with access to the state highway system, at a location that will minimize environmental impacts.	Community & Economic Development	

**TABLE 9-4: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR CIRCULATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>C-A6.2</b>	Work with the County to update the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan to accommodate a relocated airport and its operations.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County
<b>C-A6.3</b>	Establish, maintain, and enforce truck routes in the city to provide direct access to Commercial, Office, and Industrial areas and to avoid disadvantaged communities. This program should include standards for designating truck routes, signage, and enforcement mechanisms.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A7.1</b>	Develop and implement Safe-Routes-to-School plans to ensure that routes for safe walking, bicycling, and transit to schools exist. Prioritize the development and maintenance of sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting, bicycling infrastructure, transit stop amenities, traffic calming, and other safety improvements in disadvantaged communities.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>C-A7.2</b>	Promote programs where people can apply for partial and/or temporary street closures for amenities such as parklets and community events such as farmers' markets, block parties, or bicycle and pedestrian events.	Community & Economic Development	



**TABLE 9-5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>P-A1.1</b>	Acquire and develop parks and open spaces, consistent with the ability of the City to finance acquisition and operation, to reach a functional goal of at least 5 acres per 1,000 residents and a park within a quarter-mile access for each resident.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>P-A1.2</b>	Establish the following minimum criteria as a guide to improving the park system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood parks should have a minimum size of two to nine acres and a general service area of one-half mile radius; and</li> <li>• Community parks should have a minimum size of 10 acres and a general service area of a 2-mile radius.</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>P-A1.3</b>	Continue to develop existing trails and linkages and create new trails where feasible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rail Corridor Park.</b> Continue to develop the Rail Corridor Park and implement developments in the Rail Corridor Master Plan</li> <li>• <b>HG Fawcett Parkway.</b> Continue to improve and expand the HG Fawcett Parkway with active daytime uses consistent with Central California Irrigation District (CCID) use agreement, which may include exercise equipment, park furniture, and landscaping.</li> <li>• <b>Los Banos Creek Trail.</b> Prepare and adopt a Los Banos Creek Parkway Plan prior to development of creekside properties.</li> </ul>	Public Works	Community & Economic Development
<b>P-A2.1</b>	Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to require developers to dedicate and improve any portion of a planned bike path or trail system that passes through their development project sites, including any needed linkages to the regional bicycle and trail system.	Community & Economic Development	



**TABLE 9-5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>P-A2.2</b>	Include funding for trail acquisition and trail improvements in the Park Development Fee Program.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>P-A3.1</b>	Coordinate with park districts to prepare a parks, recreation, and open space needs assessment for each disadvantaged community. Based on the results of the assessment for each community, implement improvements that address barriers to outdoor physical activity, such as inadequate infrastructure and safety concerns. Prioritize park, recreation, and open space improvement activities to lower-income and higher-density areas, which may have a demonstrably greater need for these amenities.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>P-A3.2</b>	Work with recreation and the school district to identify indoor recreational and athletic facilities to serve as emergency housing and cooling centers in disadvantaged communities for natural hazards or extreme heat events. In addition, work with these districts to prepare a list of priority improvements at these facilities to implement in preparation for emergency events.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works Los Banos Unified School District



**TABLE 9-5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>P-A5.1</b>	<p>Establish priorities for open space preservation and acquisition based on an evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant natural areas that are historically, ecologically, or scientifically unique or are outstanding, important, or threatened;</li> <li>• Wildlife habitats and fragile ecosystems in need of protection;</li> <li>• Watersheds or significant water recharge areas;</li> <li>• Open space for safety and public health;</li> <li>• Lands suitable for recreation, such as biking, photography or nature study;</li> <li>• Preserving or restoring natural features and ecosystem processes that can increase resiliency to climate change; and</li> <li>• Land suitable for agricultural production.</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	
<b>P-A5.2</b>	Establish and maintain a protection zone around wetlands, riparian corridors, and identified habitat areas where development shall not occur, except as part of a parkway enhancement program (e.g., trails and bikeways).	Community & Economic Development	
<b>P-A5.3</b>	Work with the Grassland Water District to create a greenbelt/open space buffer around the perimeter of the city that provides a clear sense of identity and protects the Grassland Ecological Area.	Community & Economic Development	Grassland Water District
<b>P-A5.4</b>	Work with the Grassland Water District to establish a “no net loss” policy for wetlands and vernal pools within and adjacent to the Planning Area.	Community & Economic Development	Grassland Water District

**TABLE 9-5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>P-A6.1</b>	Develop buffer zones around Los Banos Creek Corridor and the grassland wetland areas to the east to enhance groundwater recharge and minimize impacts to habitat and species.	Community & Economic Development	Grassland Water District
<b>P-A7.1</b>	Explore feasible and implementable policies and mitigation measures to address impacts to agricultural land, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participating in a County-established agricultural mitigation program that preserves one acre of farmland for every acre converted.</li> <li>Establishing or participating in a program to restore or improve land in Merced County to a level that meets the criteria of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, in order to create new farmland in addition to preserving existing farmland.</li> <li>Establishing a local right-to-farm ordinance.</li> </ul>	Community & Economic Development	Merced County Central California Irrigation District Merced County Farm Bureau
<b>P-A7.2</b>	Establish and maintain a Grassland Resources Overlay Zone (GROZ) for the inter-canal area between the San Luis Canal and the Santa Fe Canal north of the city limit where lands within the GROZ (allowing for the bypass) shall remain in agricultural and open space uses.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>P-A8.1</b>	Identify vacant lots and underutilized public land that can be turned into neighborhood-run community gardens.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>P-A8.2</b>	Explore opportunities for community-supported agriculture within the community.	Community & Economic Development	



**TABLE 9-5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>P-A9.1</b>	Monitor groundwater quality and quantity throughout the Planning Area.	Public Works	Community & Economic Development
<b>P-A9.2</b>	Work with Central California Irrigation District to investigate a possible water recharge program.	Community & Economic Development	Central California Irrigation District
<b>P-A9.3</b>	Seek funding from the Department of Water Resources' Sustainable Groundwater Planning Grant Program (SGWP) to fund projects that promote the sustainable use of groundwater.	Community & Economic Development	California Department of Water Resources
<b>P-A9.4</b>	Explore the feasibility of surface water transfers from Central California Irrigation District and Grassland Water District to alleviate groundwater overdraft and groundwater quality issues.	Community & Economic Development	Central California Irrigation District Grassland Water District
<b>P-A10.1</b>	Explore the feasibility of creating a heritage trail linking significant historical landmarks in Los Banos.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>P-A10.2</b>	Retain a qualified architectural historian to undertake a survey to identify historic properties and historic districts eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and in the California Register of Historical Resources.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>P-A10.3</b>	Update the City's building regulations to implement the State Historic Building Code for alterations to designated historic properties.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>P-A11.1</b>	Develop and implement a plan to provide clean air refuges during times when outdoor air quality is unhealthy.	Community & Economic Development	

# 9 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

**TABLE 9-5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CONSERVATION**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>P-A11.2</b>	Purchase hybrid gasoline-electric or bio-diesel fuel vehicles for the City fleet and provide incentives to City employees who carpool or use hybrid vehicles.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>P-A12.1</b>	Prepare a Climate Action Plan (CAP) to achieve the GHG reduction targets of Senate Bill 32 for year 2030. Updated the CAP every five years to ensure the City is monitoring the plan's progress toward achieving the City's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target and to require amendment if the plan is not achieving specified level.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>P-A13.1</b>	Complete an urban forest master plan that includes quantified goals and tracking methods, prioritizing disadvantaged communities.	Community & Economic Development	





**TABLE 9-6: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR SAFETY AND NOISE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>S-A2.1</b>	Determine, locate, and improve deficiencies in the existing drainage infrastructure in partnership with regional and federal agencies.	Public Works	Community & Economic Development Merced County
<b>S-A2.2</b>	Maintain and regularly update the Storm Drain Master Plan.	Public Works	
<b>S-A2.3</b>	Coordinate with the Merced County Department of Public Works, Merced County Office of Emergency Services, California Department of Water Resources, California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on potential flooding risks, including risks associated with dam failure.	Community & Economic Development Fire Police Public Works	Merced County Department of Public Works Merced County Office of Emergency Services California Department of Water Resources California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
<b>S-A3.1</b>	Coordinate enforcement of the Hazardous Material Disclosure Program with the Merced County Health Department to identify facilities producing, using, or storing hazardous wastes.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County Health Department
<b>S-A3.2</b>	Promote the reduction, recycling, and safe disposal of household hazardous wastes through public education and awareness.	Community & Economic Development	

**TABLE 9-6: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR SAFETY AND NOISE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>S-A3.3</b>	Review, update, and implement the City's Hazardous Material Plan on a continual basis. This will include preparing guidelines on transporting hazardous material and the need for coordination with the California Highway Patrol.	Community & Economic Development Public Works	California Highway Patrol
<b>S-A4.1</b>	Regularly assess the staffing levels, facility, and equipment needs of police and fire services as the city grows.	Fire Police	
<b>S-A4.2</b>	Maintain Automatic/Mutual aid agreements with Merced County, Cal Fire, and nearby cities.	Fire	Merced County Cal Fire Nearby cities
<b>S-A4.3</b>	Create a public awareness and weed abatement program to highlight the dangers of open burning and how homeowners can protect their properties from wildfires.	Fire	
<b>S-A5.1</b>	Support public education programs involving crime prevention and safety issues.	Police	
<b>S-A5.2</b>	Maintain mutual aid agreements with Merced County, neighboring law enforcement agencies, and the California Highway Patrol.	Police Fire	Merced County California Highway Patrol
<b>S-A6.1</b>	Continue to participate in County-led efforts to regularly update and implement the Merced County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) , consistent with guidelines of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Disaster Act of 2000.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County



**TABLE 9-6: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR SAFETY AND NOISE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>S-A6.2</b>	Work with owners and operators of critical use facilities (i.e., hospitals, police stations, public assembly facilities, transportation services) to ensure that they can provide alternate sources of electricity, water, and sewerage in the event that regular utilities are interrupted in a disaster.	Community & Economic Development	Sutter Health
<b>S-A6.3</b>	Maintain and improve current early-warning systems and response facilities (Local Emergency Operations Center, National Warning System, civil preparedness radio systems, etc.).	Fire Police	
<b>S-A6.4</b>	Coordinate regular emergency drills with City and County emergency service providers.	Fire Police	Merced County Office of Emergency Services
<b>S-A6.5</b>	Collaborate, and exchange information with other local, state, and federal agencies and with utility service providers in activities related to terrorism prevention and response.	Police	
<b>S-A6.6</b>	Develop and adopt an emergency evacuation route network of roadways accounting for how natural hazards could impact the feasibility of each route and work with the County of Merced Office of Emergency Services to ensure that each route connects to regional evacuation routes.	Fire Police	Merced County Office of Emergency Services
<b>S-A7.1</b>	Identify areas of the city where climate change is anticipated to create or increase hazard risks, such as flooding. Identify development methods to reduce hazard risks and increase the resilience of any projects in these areas.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>S-A7.2</b>	Pursue and support opportunities to retrofit and harden important sets of infrastructure, such as roadways, bridges, flood-control channels, telecommunications, and energy delivery systems.	Public Works	

**TABLE 9-6: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR SAFETY AND NOISE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>S-A7.3</b>	Update the Safety Element on a regular basis, as required by the California Government Code, in concert with the Los Banos' General Plan Housing Element to ensure the document's relevance to future safety conditions in the city. When updates to other safety documents occur, incorporate, and make the Safety Element consistent with these updates.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>S-A7.4</b>	Incorporate nature-based environmental design and green infrastructure (e.g., permeable surfaces to encourage natural drainage, drought-adapted species to reduce water consumption, plantings with strong root systems to reduce erosion) into existing and new development, as feasible.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>S-A7.5</b>	Collaborate on existing and future hazard risks stemming from climate change with Merced County and the Merced County Association of Governments.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County MCAG
<b>S-A7.6</b>	Continue to pursue local energy generation and resilience projects, such as the Wright Solar power plant, rooftop renewable energy systems, and battery storage systems.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>S-A7.7</b>	Pursue grant funding from programs, such as the California Department of Conservation's Best Practices Pilot Program, that increase the resilience and sustainability of future development in Los Banos.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>S-A7.8</b>	Support the development of resilience hubs throughout the city that can function as refuge centers for evacuees or victims otherwise impacted by hazards as well as command centers with energy and communications redundancies to support government operations during and after a hazard event.	Community & Economic Development	Fire Police Public Works



**TABLE 9-6: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR SAFETY AND NOISE**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>S-A8.1</b>	<p>Prohibit long-term noise increases above the following at existing sensitive receptor property lines (e.g., from traffic noise increases), or new uses that generate noise levels at a sensitive receptor property line:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater than 1.5 dBA CNEL increase for ambient noise environments of 65 dBA CNEL and higher;</li> <li>• Greater than 3 dBA CNEL increase for ambient noise environments of 60 - 64 CNEL; and</li> <li>• Greater than 5 dBA CNEL increase for ambient noise environments of less than 60 dBA CNEL.</li> </ul> <p>For projects that exceed these noise increases due to project-generated traffic noise, a “fair share” fund shall be considered where projects exceeding these increases pay into a fund for roadway improvements (e.g., repaving with “quiet pavement” to reduce traffic noise levels).</p>	Community & Economic Development	
<b>S-A8.2</b>	Work with the Los Banos Airport to minimize noise impacts of flight operations on existing noise-sensitive development.	Community & Economic Development	Los Banos Municipal Airport
<b>S-A8.3</b>	<p>The City shall establish and adopt a list of construction best management practices to be implemented during the construction phase and incorporated into Los Banos Municipal Code Article 27, <i>Noise Control</i>, to protect noise sensitive receptors (e.g., residences, schools, and hospitals) from the temporary effects of construction noise. The City of Los Banos Building Department shall verify that construction best management practices, as appropriate, are on the demolition, grading, and construction plans prior to issuance of demolition, grading and/or building permits.</p>	Community & Economic Development	Public Works



**TABLE 9-7: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>PFS-A2.1</b>	Work with the Los Banos Branch of the Merced County Library to create either a new large library facility or several satellite branches to serve additional population in Los Banos.	Community & Economic Development	Merced County Library
<b>PFS-A2.2</b>	Explore the feasibility of participating in the Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Centers for Vulnerable Populations Incentive Pilot Program administered by the State of California to retrofit ventilation systems of public facilities to serve as clean air centers during wildfires and other smoke events.	Public Works	
<b>PFS-A3.1</b>	Regularly review and update impact mitigation fees to help fund water and sewage services for new development.	Community & Economic Development	Public Works
<b>PFS-A3.2</b>	Become a signatory to the California Urban Water Conservation Council and implement all Demand Management Measures as soon as they become feasible.	Public Works	Community & Economic Development
<b>PFS-A3.3</b>	Implement recommendations set forth in the City's current Urban Water Management Plan, including initiatives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A water survey program;</li> <li>• A water conservation program (Water Patrol); and</li> <li>• A Residential Plumbing retrofit program.</li> </ul>	Public Works	
<b>PFS-A3.4</b>	Engage the business community in protecting the City's water supply.	Community & Economic Development	Chamber of Commerce



**TABLE 9-7: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

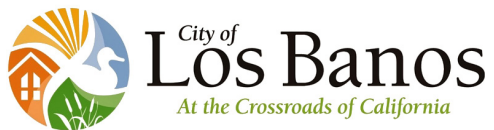
		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>PFS-A4.1</b>	Create an incentive program to promote improvement of existing residential, commercial, and industrial developments and structures with green infrastructure improvements.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>PFS-A5.1</b>	Implement recommendations put forth by the City’s current Wastewater Management Plan with regards to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The future expansion of existing treatment facilities beyond 4.9 million gallons per day (mgd), and/or the construction of a new membrane bi-reactor (MBR) facility to meet projected population growth; and</li> <li>• The acquisition of land for treatment purposes.</li> </ul>	Public Works	
<b>PFS-A5.2</b>	Study the feasibility of expanding the use of wastewater effluent for irrigation of pasturelands.	Public Works	
<b>PFS-A5.3</b>	Evaluate the potential for the use of reclaimed water (purple pipe) throughout the city.	Public Works	
<b>PFS-A6.1</b>	Assess the capacity of Billy Wright Landfill and prioritize planning for an early expansion of Billy Wright Landfill or identifying an alternative landfill space.	Public Works	
<b>PFS-A7.1</b>	Develop an economic incentives financing program to support renewable energy projects.	Community & Economic Development	

**TABLE 9-7: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

		<b>Primary Responsibility</b>	<b>Supporting Departments and Agencies</b>
<b>PFS-A7.2</b>	Conduct a community land and resources audit that assesses current land uses, characteristics, and zoning designations to find areas best suited to primary use solar development; identifies needed zoning code changes; and creates siting standards that minimize impacts on sensitive resources.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>PFS-A8.1</b>	Prioritize needs and services in disadvantaged communities as part of the annual budgeting process.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>PFS-A8.2</b>	Compile, maintain, and make easily available a list of numbers to call for basic needs, such as code enforcement, housing assistance, food assistance, and healthcare. Provide this information in multiple languages.	Community & Economic Development	
<b>PFS-A8.3</b>	Explore the feasibility of participating in the Green Infrastructure Program administered by the State of California Natural Resources Agency to implement green infrastructure projects.	Community & Economic Development Public Works	



This page intentionally left blank.



City of  
**Los Banos**

*At the Crossroads of California*

---

---





City of  
**Los Banos**  
*At the Crossroads of California*

---